

**2648**

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE  
LIBRARY**

**GOL PARK, CALCUTTA-29.**

**OPEN 10 A.M. to 8-30 P.M.**

**TEL. 46-5678**

**LATE FEE : 5 paise per day after the last date stamped below.**

**RENEWALS : By post, telephone or in person. Please quote  
the number stamped on the pocket opposite and  
last date below.**

8 SEP 1973

U  
R  
M.

**P.T.O.**









**Vol. IV**

# आय

**A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW**

*(English Edition of the "Revue de Grande Synthèse")*

**Editors :**

**SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE — PAUL & MIRRA RICHARD.**

**15th August 1917**

**41, Rue Francois Martin, Pondicherry.**

**INDIA.**

---

**MODERN PRESS, PONDICHERY.**

# "ARYA"

---

## A MONTHLY REVIEW.

---

EDITORS:

SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH — PAUL & MIRRA RICHARD.

*The "ARYA" is a Review of pure philosophy.*

*The object which it has set before itself is twofold:—*

1. *A systematic study of the highest problems of existence;*

2. *The formation of a vast Synthesis of knowledge, harmonising the diverse religious traditions of humanity occidental as well as oriental. Its method will be that of a realism, at once rational and transcendental,—a realism consisting in the unification of intellectual and scientific disciplines with those of intuitive experience.*

*This Review will also serve as an organ for the various groups and societies founded on its inspiration*

The Review will publish —

Synthetic studies in speculative Philosophy.

Translations and commentaries of ancient texts.

Studies in comparative Religion.

Practical methods of inner culture and self-development

---

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.

India	...	...	6 Rs.
Foreign	...	...	10 Shillings

A NUMBER..... 8 ANNAS.

---

(For students only)

Half-yearly Rs 3

---

All rights reserved

# आयं

**A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW**

**Editors :**

**SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE — PAUL & MIRRA RICHARD.**

**Vol. IV.**

**1917—1918**

**41, Rue Francois Martin, Pondicherry.**

**INDIA.**

---

**THE MODERN PRESS, PONDICHERRY.**



# CONTENTS

---

ABOUT ASTROLOGY ... 251

ARYA'S FOURTH YEAR ... 763

## ESSAYS ON THE GITA

The Sacrifice and the Lord of the Sacrifice ... 11

The Principle of Divine Works ... 72

The Divine Birth and Divine Works (1) ... 143

" " (2) ... 215

" " (3) ... 276

The Divine Worker ... 342

Equality ... 408

Knowledge and Equality ... 462

The Determinism of Nature ... 523

Beyond the Gunas ... 588

Nirvana and Works in the World ... 650

The Gist of the Karmavoga ... 715

## ETERNAL WISDOM

### The Practice of the Truth ( continued )

Firmness ... 30

Simplicity : Modesty ... 96

## II

## The Conquest of Self

Disinterestedness	...	...	166
To Renounce Coveting	...	...	226
To Renounce the Fruit of Works	...	...	286
To Renounce Desire	...	...	354
To Renounce the World	...	...	422
To Renounce One's Self	...	...	484
The Mastery of the Senses	...	...	546

## FUTURE POETRY

Introductory	... 310
The Essence of Poetry	... 378
Rhythm and Movement	... 443
Style and Substance	... 507
Poetic Vision and the Mantra	... 567
The National Evolution of Poetry	... 633
Character of English Poetry (1)	... 697
" " (2)	... 753

## HYMNS OF THE ATRIS

## Hymns to Mitra-Varuna ( continued )

The Eighth Hymn	...	...	46
The Ninth Hymn	...	...	48
The Tenth Hymn	...	...	49
The Eleventh Hymn	...	...	49
Hymn to Varuna	...	...	111
Hymns to the Dawn			
The First Hymn	...	...	179
The Second Hymn	...	...	241
Hymn to Savitri	...	...	288

## II

IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY (continued) ...	51,
	116, 182, 243, 300, 367,
	435, 498, 560, 622, 689,
	744.

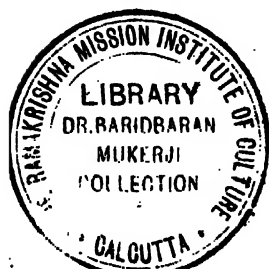
## LIFE DIVINE

Chap.	XXXVI. Man and the Evolutionary Movement	1
„	XXXVII From the Undivine to the Divine (1)	65
„	„ „ „ „ (2)	129
„	XXXVIII The Ascent and its Downward Eye	193
„	XXXIX The Ascent out of the Ignorance	257
„	XL The Fundamental Character of the Ignorance	321
„	XLI The Origin of the Ignorance	385
„	XLII Exclusive Concentration of Tapas	449
„	XLIII The Order of the Worlds	513
„	XLIV Rebirth	577
„	XLV The Philosophy of Rebirth	639
„	XLVI Rebirth and the Other Worlds	704

## PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(continued) 33,

99, 169, 228, 290, 357, 425, 486,  
550, 608, 675, 735.





# IV

SENTENCES FROM BHARTRIHARI ... 319

SYNTHESIS OF YOGA ( continued )

Chap. XXXIII	The Ladder of Self-	
	Transcendence	21
„ XXXIV	Vijnana or Gnosis	85
„ XXXV	The Conditions of Gnosis	157
„ XXXVI	Gnosis and Ananda	204
„ XXXVII	The Higher and the Lower	
	Knowledge	267
„ XXXVIII	Samadhi	332
„ XXXIX	Hatha yoga	398
„ XL	Raja yoga	475
„ XLI	Love and the Triple Path	537
„ XLII	The Motives of Devotion	599
„ XLIII	The Godward Emotions	664
„ XLIV	The Way of Devotion	728

THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES 62

VEDIC FIRE 125

## ERRATA

For page 641 read 640 and for 640 read 641

# आयं

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

---

15th August 1917

---

### CONTENTS

---

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Ch. XXXVI. (2) Man and the Evolutionary Movement	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Sacrifice and the Lord of the Sacrifice	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXIII. The Ladder of Self-Transcendence	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
Firmness	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (XIII)	
HYMNS OF THE ATRIS.....	A. G.
The Eighth Hymn to Mitra Varuna	
The Ninth Hymn to Mitra-Varuna	
The Tenth Hymn to Mitra-Varuna	
The Eleventh Hymn to Mitra-Varuna	
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXIV	
THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES	

---



# The Life Divine

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### MAN AND THE EVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

World-existence, it clearly appears, is a harmonic rhythm of the Absolute's self-manifestation and self-experience in which there are certain eternal metres or measures, *chhandasi*, unchanging, ever-persistent and running through the whole strain,—the basic interplay of the cosmic principles, *tatweas*, which all fall under the seven powers of Being, the seven eternal notes of existence ; but also there is an evolutionary strain which constitutes the progression of the divine harmony. It is this evolutionary rhythm which we have to seize in its right emphasis and incidence \* rising from the foundation of the eternal notes, if we are to understand the divine purpose in the cosmos. This progression—we have spoken of it as evolutionary, but it is, more properly speaking a double movement of involution and evolution,—moves between the two great poles of Knowledge and Ignorance or, again more properly speaking, perfect self-conscience and inconscience ; for the full self-consciousness of Spirit disappears, involved in the inconscience of crude Force

---

\* It is the great value of modern thought that it helps us to restore this emphasis which the ancient *seers* perceived profoundly, but which the ancient *thinkers*, whether Vedantist or other philosophers, either missed or minimised.

in Matter, and has to evolve again out of it through that partial knowledge of the mentalised individual being to which we give the name of the Ignorance. Now here there are two possibilities. Either Spirit first involves itself in the pure inconscience of the material universe ignorant of Spirit and, evolving out of it, again involves all being into a pure consciousness of Spirit ignorant of the cosmic activity, or else it has involved all the seven principles of being in the material inconscience in order to manifest a rhythm of universe of which Matter shall be the first dominant keynote and in that rhythm it evolves again its hidden principles, all the six concealed notes of its music, into a full self-consciousness in which Spirit is the dominant note and contains, deploys, governs, gives their real value to the others. It is in this latter view that we have seen the true explanation of the harmonies of world-existence.

The other view we have rejected because it makes of the self-consciousness of Spirit another kind of ignorance or nescience, the nescience of its own cosmic activities. In order to get rid of that paradox, in order to show that this nescience is the true Knowledge to which man has to arrive, we have to invent the illusionist explanation, that the world is not a manifestation of the Absolute, but an illusion of the individual soul which is itself an illusion,—since there is no individual but only the One,—a non-existence imagined by a non-existent, and the manifestation therefore not of a reality, but of a falsehood. This falsehood is got rid of by getting rid of the falsifier, the individual being; by forgetting or losing ourselves in the Absolute, who is for ever empty of all cosmic activity, we forget or lose this dream of a cosmos, and such nescience of cosmos is the true knowledge. But this logic, we see, is the getting rid of one paradox by another yet more intricate. Nevertheless it has so woven itself about this whole question of the Knowledge and the Ignorance

on which the riddle of existence hinges, that we have had to meet it at every turn in order to keep the field clear for another and more satisfying conclusion.

The harmonic rhythm of a complex world-existence,—not of the material universe alone, as we shall see,—is the music indeed of one Existence whom in its completeness, *pûrnam*, inconceivable by our limited minds, we call the Absolute ; but its oneness is not an exclusive unity ; it is eternally multiple and manifold. It plays itself out in the relations of self-experience between three powers of the Absolute,—the transcendent, that which usually we call God, the cosmic or universal being of God which supports the multiple manifestation of the Absolute, and the individual being of the Divine which supports and inhabits the myriad forms taken by the Absolute in its manifestation. In this individual being and its consciousness, its soul developing towards full self-consciousness of the secret Divinity, is the key of the whole evolutionary movement, the rhythmic progression, the swelling of the sevenfold note of being out of ignorance into knowledge, out of inconscience into divine consciousness. The Absolute, transcendent and universal, is present in every individual. Therefore the growth of the individual consciousness moves towards the discovery of the Absolute in everything relative, in all relative experiences ; for by seizing on that it is laying its grasp on its own supreme reality. By transcending self-ignorance, the individual rises in consciousness, as we may say, till he reaches the knowledge of the oneness of his being with the transcendent being of God ; so he arrives at supreme self-knowledge and is able to live within himself subjectively a divine life capable of spiritual perfection. By enlarging the positive side of his self-ignorance, which is really a partial self-knowledge, he breaks out of the ego in free self-extension until he reaches the knowledge of the oneness of his being with the being of the cosmos and of all

individuals ; so he arrives at his widest self-knowledge and is able to live in a vast universal self—in which all objects of his vision are seen as one with the subject, one self with him,—a divine life capable of the perfection of all divine relations. To seize on the absolute in the relative, to arrive through his individual being in cosmos into the transcendent and to enlarge it at the same time into universality is therefore the crowning movement of man's increasing self-knowledge. To be able, by the force of this self-knowledge, to live in a spiritual sense of the Absolute, in a perfect unity with the transcendent Divine and in both an essential and a harmonic unity with the cosmic Being and the self in all existences, is his divine living.

But here a question arises, to which the answer has indeed been given already, but must now be made explicit. Supposing this world-existence to be a manifestation of the Divine, why should it be necessary to suppose within it an evolution of consciousness centred here in man, with divine being and divine living as its culmination ? Since all is a manifestation of the Absolute and the Absolute is the Divine, all is divine, each form of life, each way of being. We see that the principles of the universal manifestation are for ever the same and, with whatever variations in Time, the principal divisions of existence seem also to be for ever the same. Man like the metal, the plant, the animal, the god, is one of these divisions, a special kind of existence with his own nature, laws, limits, capacities, his *swadharma*, to use the term of the Gita. Should not then each be considered divine in its own kind and should not the perfection of each being lie in the observation of the law of its own nature, its full play certainly, but not any kind of transcendence ? When all are stationary and content in their own being, even the gods, why should man alone be discontent, seek to transcend himself, to grow into the superman, to put on the

nature and capacities of the god, to become divine ? His perfection should rather lie in a complete human life, in the fullness of his *sacdharmā*, and there is no justification for any ideal of a self-transcendence and a divine living. Sachchidananda manifests the world for his self-delight in manifestation and in each form and way of being there is its appropriate way of the delight of being ; to look beyond, to seek for an object, aim or good beyond our self-sufficient humanity is to bring in a teleological element into our view of existence which seems to have no justification except in the restless desire and imagination of the human mentality. In other words, the progress of humanity, so far as there is any real progress, must move within the cycles of our known human mentality and psychology,—very much as an old theory conceived of the cosmic manifestation moving in a repetition of unprogressive cycles, for in them progression is compensated for by retrogression and things always remain eventually the same.

It is perfectly true that the whole sense and object of self-existence is the delight of being, of self-consciousness, of self-force and their works or their rest from works, and that Sachchidananda has no object of existence beyond that existence itself. His world-being is not teleological in the sense of having an aim beyond himself which it has to reach ; but there is no reason why he should not admit a teleological element within himself, no reason, that is to say, why a given movement of the world-being, as distinct from the totality, should not have a purpose beyond itself, beyond the immediate limits of its growing capacity, should not in a word be the nexus of an evolutionary becoming. There may be a progressive delight in existence as well as the delight of self-repetition. Undoubtedly Sachchidananda takes delight in each way of his being and each form of his being or that way and that form could not persist, could not even at all have ex-



isted. Therefore each way of being has its own law of existence, its nature, its capacity and is firmly founded by the divine delight in that law, nature, and capacity. Each star is satisfied in the movement of its own orbit ; each living creature seeks its measure of possible delight of existence within the gamut of being, force and consciousness assigned to it. But this does not prevent each from being a grade, a note in a rising evolutionary rhythm, And if every general kind is fixed, like the plant, the animal, after once it has appeared, that certainly proves both that the Self-existent still takes delight in that form and that its maintenance is still necessary, even after higher forms have been evolved, as a support, a fixed helping note of the evolutionary rhythm ; but it does not follow that the law of fixity shall remain unchanged in all the grades of the ascension ; rather it seems rational that there should appear a form, a way of existence which shall be the nexus of a conscious transition.

Evolution is a self-evident fact and law within the rhythm of cosmic being or at least of the material universe, quite apart from the validity or otherwise of the modern evolutionist theory. Sachchidananda as the soul in Nature does move from grade to grade of his manifest being. The doctrine of the scientific evolutionists evolving the physical form of man by a series of developments from the protoplasm through reptile and fish and bird and animal may or may not be true ; it is possible also that it may be only a partial truth and that certain stages of the evolution, even all, or at any rate the appearance of man, that great and apparently sudden leap beyond the animal, may have been determined by a psychological intervention of which, naturally, the evidence of physical Nature can bear no record. But this is proved beyond a doubt that, by whatever means, there has been an evolution in Nature, —or, to put it otherwise, that the Spirit in the world has, in the language of the Upanishads, variously created and

ordained different kinds of existence out of one original seed and, we may add, has built up their variations around one original crude pattern, and that in this creation there has been a successive gradation of which man is the highest terrestrial result. The knowledge of this principle of evolutionary succession is not entirely modern. The Upanishad asserts clearly that in the dealings of the Purusha with the world the form of man came subsequently to the form of the animal, and the Purana suggestively declares that the *tamasic* creation, including the animal, came first in the workings of Rudra ; the *sattvic* intervention of the mental principle, by which man the thinker arrived, is therefore subsequent in the evolutionary rhythm of the earth-creation.

But what is more important than the evolution of forms is the evolution of the self-manifesting soul in things suggested by the phrase in the Purana. Either keeping pace with the physical evolution or acting, we may more reasonably hold, as its secret cause there has been a psychological evolution of the soul in forms ; each ascending grade in the progress of forms has been marked by an ascending grade in the development of life and mind. That is the capital fact of evolution, the key to its whole principle and process. And the most important step has been the appearance of man which is the decisive step, the radical change in the economy of Nature. It is this change which gives us a right to refuse to see in the cycles of man the same mechanical principle of an unprogressive orbit, as in the cycles of the stars or the recurrent life of plant and animal ; it is that he is characteristically a psychological and not a physical being, a mind and soul much more than a body and not like the others a body much more than a soul. All the rest from the star to the animal belong, in the phrase of the Purana, to the *tamasic* creation in which the principle of inertia and ignorance predominates ; dominated by the principle

of ignorance they have not developed that self-consciousness which is the soul's completed awakening out of the grasp of the inconscient force of material Nature ; dominated by the companion principle of inertia, — for according to the degree of consciousness is the degree of self-initiating force of consciousness, — they act under the control of Prakriti, the executive force-impulse in Nature, and do not participate consciously in their own evolution. In man the sattwic or luminous principle emerges from the hold of the tamasic ; he has stepped beyond the dividing line, crossed the Rubicon beyond which lies the conquest of his self-empire, *swarajya* ; he is a self-conscious being. In the tamasic creation Purusha is subject phenomenally to Prakriti, the soul driven helplessly by Nature ; in the sattwic Purusha begins to lay hold on Prakriti, the soul first begins to participate consciously in her works, then to master Nature.

Where must this tendency of man, the thinking and self-conscious being, stop and say " I can go no further ? what are his limits, — not the immediate and actual, but the potential and ultimate ? Or are there any limits ? Undoubtedly, man like other beings has a law of his nature, a *swadharma* ; in its fulfilment must lie his perfection and that perfection must proceed on its lines and within its limits. But the decisive part of his *swadharma* seems to be this that he is a self-evolving soul, a nexus of the psychological evolution from the ignorance to full self-consciousness, and in that then must lie the determining line of his perfection. He has started with a limited self-consciousness and has been constantly enriching and increasing it, constantly gathering into it all that he can realise of the world and of God, of what is around him and of what is above him ; is there any reason to suppose that he need stop short of enlarging it into unity with the universal and the infinite ? His progress has been a greater and greater conscious participation of the soul in the

workings of the force of Nature within him and the character of this greating has been an increasing mastery of these workings ; his constant impulse is to rule himself and his environment ; but to indubitable rule he cannot arrive unless he becomes united with the Divine who is the sole real master of Nature. That union then would seem to be his goal. In a word, he is in his nature, his *svadharma*, a soul participating in its own evolution or self-manifestation and that evolution is a constant self-transcendence and taking up of his lower past self into a higher transfiguring self ; he has transcended his beginnings, he has transcended each stage he has reached ; he must surely transcend all his present and past-self-realisation, until he stands in union with the perfect self-knowledge and mastery of the transcendent Divine above cosmic Nature. For self-conscious Purusha is self-conscious Sachchidananda and enlarging its self-knowledge and self-mastery it must reach in the end the perfect being of Sachchidananda revealed in his eternal Godhead.

The limit of man's progress and perfection must be determined by the limit of his conscious aspiration which is always a promise of the power to which Sachchidananda in him intends to attain. It is the greatest possible error of our reason to take the aspiration of the soul for a mere groundless imagination because it exceeds the actual fact of our materially attained knowledge or our present mode of being and limit of capacity. This aspiration is an indication of the will of the infinite divinity within us, it is its consciousness of that which it bears within it still unexpressed. If you insist on calling it imagination,—it is much more,—it is still the creative imagination of the Divine, the foreseeing of a figure of itself which it has still to shape. And what we must look to, is the highest imagination or aspiration of earth's greatest souls, for they are the mirrors of our greatest capacity. Even if the mass of men rest content with what is already achieved

or cannot rise beyond what their limited practical reason sees immediately in front of it, that incapacity is not the test of man's destiny; the true indices are to be found in our greatest positive aspiration and not in any partial or complete negation. And if man is often so apt to fix his hopes beyond in another world and despair of his earthly life or to think sometimes that only by an escape from the world can he attain to the highest for which he longs, that arises from an excessive sense of the gulf which separates the actuality from the thing that he hopes to become and it cannot be taken for the last word of the Divine within him. His aspiration, his vision of his potentiality is to exchange his present human for a divine being, nature, consciousness, knowledge, power, felicity, and this hope, this faith while it soars beyond earth to already existent heavens, yet returns also constantly to earth with the promise of the kingdom of heaven to his terrestrial being. To transcend and yet embrace heaven and earth in the efflorescence of the Divine within him is the largest word of his aspiration and the whole index of his destiny.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE SACRIFICE AND THE LORD OF THE SACRIFICE

We have, before we can proceed further, to gather up all that has been said in its main principles. The whole of the Gita's gospel of works rests upon its idea of sacrifice and it contains in fact the eternal truth of God and the world and works of which the human mind seizes ordinarily only fragmentary notions and standpoints and builds upon them its various theories of life and ethics and religion, but to the entirety of which it must always tend to return when it returns in its ages of true enlightenment to the synthetic entirety of its knowledge. It reposes upon this fundamental Vedantic truth that all being is the one Brahman and all existence the wheel of Brahman, a divine movement opening out from God and returning to God. All is the activity of Nature, the power of the Divine, working out the consciousness and will of the supreme Purusha, the divine Soul master of her works and inhabitant of her forms, for his satisfaction, descending into the absorption of the forms of things and the works of life and mind to return through mind and self-knowledge to the conscious possession of the Soul that dwells within her. In this cycle of Nature the Purusha assumes three eternal poises. It manifests itself in the mutable, the finite, the many, all existences, *sarvabhūtāni*, it is the finite personality of these million creatures with their infinite diversities and various relations and it is the

soul and force of the action of the gods, the cosmic powers of the Divine who preside over the workings of the life of the universe and are different universal forms and personalities of the one Self and supreme Person. Secret behind and within all forms and existences it is the immutable, the infinite, the impersonal, the one unchanging and indivisible Self in which all these many are one and by returning to which the active, finite personality of the individual being recovers the largeness of its universality and the peace and poise of its unity with all in the indivisible Infinite. But the highest secret of all, *uttamam rahasyam*, is the Purushottama ; this is the supreme Divine, God, who possesses both the infinite and the finite and in whom the personal and the impersonal, the one Self and the many existences, being and becoming, the world-action and the supracosmic peace, *prarriti* and *nirriti*, meet, are united, are possessed together and in each other. In God all things find their secret truth and their absolute reconciliation.

All truth of works must depend upon this truth of being. All active existence is a sacrifice of works offered by Prakriti to Purusha, by Nature to the supreme and infinite Soul through the desire of the multiple finite Soul within her. Life is an altar to which she brings her workings and the fruits of her workings and lays them before whatever aspect of the Divinity the consciousness in her has reached for whatever result of the sacrifice the desire of the living soul can seize on as its immediate or its highest good. According to the grade of consciousness and being which the soul has reached in Nature, will be the Divinity it worships, the delight which it seeks and the hope for which it sacrifices. In the movement of the mutable Purusha in nature all is interchange ; a mutual giving and receiving is the law of Life without which it cannot for one moment endure, and this fact is the stamp of the divine creative Will on the world it has manifested

in its being, the proof that with sacrifice as their eternal companion the Lord of creatures has created all these existences. The universal law of sacrifice is the sign that the world is of God and belongs to God and that life is his dominion and house of worship and not a field for the self-satisfaction of the independent ego ; not the fulfilment of the ego but the discovery of God, the worship and seeking of the Divine and the Infinite through a constantly enlarging sacrifice culminating in a perfect self-giving founded on a perfect self-knowledge is that to which the experience of life is intended to lead.

But the individual being begins with ignorance and persists long in ignorance. Acutely conscious of himself he sees the ego as the cause and whole meaning of life and not the Divine. He sees himself as the doer of works and does not see that all the workings of existence including his own internal and external activities are the workings of one universal Nature and nothing else. He sees himself as the enjoyer of works and imagines that for him all exists and him Nature ought to satisfy and obey his personal will ; he does not see that she is not at all concerned with satisfying him or at all careful of his will, but obeys a higher universal will and seeks to satisfy a God-head who transcends her and her works and creations ; his finite being, his will and his satisfactions are hers and not his and she offers them at every moment as a sacrifice to the Divine of whose purpose in her she makes all this the covert instrumentation. Because of this ignorance whose seal is egoism, the creature ignores the law of sacrifice and seeks to take all he can for himself and gives only what Nature by her internal and external compulsion forces him to give. He can really take nothing except what she allows him to receive as his portion, what the divine Powers within her yield to his desire. The egoistic soul in a world of sacrifice is as if a thief or robber who takes what these Powers bring to him and has no mind to give



in return. He misses the true meaning of life and, since he does not use life and works for the enlargement and elevation of his being through sacrifice, he lives in vain.

Only when the individual being begins to perceive and acknowledge in his acts the value of the self in others as well as the power and needs of his own ego, begins to perceive universal Nature behind his own workings and through the cosmic godheads gets some glimpse of the One and the Infinite, is he on his way to the transcendence of his limitation by the ego and the discovery of his soul. He begins to discover a law other than that of his desires, to which his desires must be more and more subordinated and subjected ; he develops the purely egoistic into the understanding and ethical being. He begins to give more value to the claims of the self in others and less to the claims of his ego ; he admits the strife between egoism and altruism and by the increase of his altruistic tendencies he prepares the enlargement of his own consciousness and being. He begins to perceive Nature and divine Powers in Nature to whom he owes sacrifice, adoration, obedience, because it is by them and by their law that the workings both of the mental and the material world are controlled and he learns that only by increasing their presence and their greatness in his thought and will and life can he himself increase his powers, knowledge, right action and the satisfactions which these things bring to him. Thus he adds the religious and supraphysical to the material and egoistic sense of life and prepares himself to rise through the finite to the Infinite.

But this is an intermediate stage. It is still subject to the law of desire, the centrality of all things in the conceptions and needs of his ego and the control of his being as well as his works by Nature, though it is a regulated and governed desire, a clarified ego and a Nature more and more subtilised and enlightened by the sattwic, the highest natural principle. All this

is still within the domain, the enlarged domain of the mutable, finite and personal. The real self-knowledge and consequently the right way of works lies beyond ; for the sacrifice done with knowledge is the highest sacrifice and alone brings a perfect working. That can only come when he perceives that the self in him and the self in others are one being and this self is something higher than the ego, an infinite, an impersonal, a universal existence in whom all move and have their being, — when he perceives that all the cosmic gods to whom he offers his sacrifice are forms of one infinite Godhead and when again, leaving all his limited and limiting conceptions of that one Godhead, he perceives him to be the supreme and ineffable Deity who is at once the finite and the infinite, the one self and the many, beyond Nature though manifesting himself through Nature, beyond limitation by qualities though formulating the power of his being through infinite quality. This is the Purushotama to whom the sacrifice has to be offered, not for the transient fruits of his works, but for the possession of the Divine and in order to live in harmony and union with the Divine.

In other words, man's way to liberation and perfection lies through an increasing impersonality. It is his ancient and constant experience that the more he opens himself to the impersonal and infinite, to that which is pure and high and one and common in all things and beings, the impersonal and infinite in Nature, the impersonal and infinite in life, the impersonal and infinite in his own subjectivity, the less he is bound by his ego and by the circle of the finite, the more he feels a sense of largeness, peace, pure happiness. The pleasure, joy, satisfaction which the finite by itself can give or the ego in its own right attain, is transitory, petty and insecure. To dwell entirely in the ego-sense and its finite conceptions, powers, satisfactions is to find this world for ever

full of transience and suffering, *anityam asukham* ; the finite life is always troubled by a certain sense of vanity for this fundamental reason that the finite is not the whole or the highest truth of life ; life is not entirely real until it opens into the sense of the infinite. It is for this reason that the Gita opens its gospel of works by insisting on the Brahmic consciousness, the impersonal life, that great object of the discipline of the ancient sages. For the impersonal, the infinite, the One in which all the permanent, mutable, multiple activity of the world finds above itself its base of permanence, security and peace, is the immobile Self, the Akshara, the Brahman. To raise one's consciousness and the poise of one's being out of limited personality into this infinite and impersonal Brahman is the first spiritual necessity. To see all beings in this one Self is the knowledge which raises the soul out of egoistic ignorance and its works and results ; to live in it is to acquire peace and firm spiritual foundation.

The way to bring about this great transformation follows a double path ; for there is the way of knowledge and there is the way of works, and the Gita combines them in a firm synthesis. The way of knowledge is to turn the understanding, the intelligent will away from its downward absorption in the workings of the mind and the senses and upward to the self, the Purusha or Brahman ; it is to make it dwell always on the one idea of the one Self and not in the many-branching conceptions of the mind and many-streaming impulses of desire. Taken by itself this path would seem to lead to the complete renunciation of works, to an immobile passivity and to the severance of the soul from Nature. But in reality such an absolute renunciation, passivity and severance are impossible. Purusha and Prakriti are twin principles of being which cannot be severed, and so long as we remain in Nature, our workings in Nature must continue, even though they may take a different form or rather a different sense from

those of the unenlightened soul. The real renunciation—for renunciation, *sannyasa*, there must be—is not the fleeing from works, but the slaying of ego and desire. The way is to abandon attachment to the fruit of works even while doing them, and the way is to recognise Nature as the agent and leave her to do her works and to live in the soul as the witness and sustainer, watching and sustaining her, but not attached either to her actions or their fruits. The ego, the limited and troubled personality is then quieted and merged in the consciousness of the one impersonal Self, while the works of Nature continue to our vision to operate through all these "becomings" or existences who are now seen by us as living and acting and moving, under her impulsion entirely, in this one infinite Being; our own finite existence is seen and felt to be only one of these and its workings are seen and felt to be those of Nature, not of our real self which is the silent, impersonal unity. The ego claimed them as its own doings and therefore we thought them ours; but the ego is now dead and henceforth they are no longer ours, but Nature's. We have achieved by the slaying of ego impersonality in our being and consciousness; we have achieved by the renunciation of desire impersonality in the works of our nature. We are free not only in inaction, but in action; our liberty does not depend on a physical and temperamental immobility and vacancy, nor do we fall from freedom directly we act. Even in a full current of natural action the impersonal soul in us remains calm, still, and free.

The liberation given by this perfect impersonality is real, is complete, is indispensable; but is it the last word, the end of the whole matter? All life, all world-existence, we have said, is the sacrifice offered by Nature to the Purusha, the one and secret soul in Nature, in whom all her workings take place; but its real sense is obscured in us by ego, by desire, by our limited, active, multiple

personality. We have risen out of ego and desire and limited personality and by impersonality, its great corrective, we have found the impersonal Godhead ; we have identified our being with the one self and soul in whom all exist. The sacrifice of works continues, conducted not by ourselves any longer, but by Nature,—Nature operating through the finite part of our being,—mind, senses, body,—but in our infinite being. But to whom then is this sacrifice offered and with what object ? For the Impersonal has no activity and no desires, no object to be gained, no dependence for anything on all this world of creatures ; it exists for itself, in its own self-delight in its own immutable, eternal being. We may have to do works without desire as a means in order to reach this impersonal self-existence and self-delight, but that movement once executed the object of works is finished ; the sacrifice is no longer needed. Works may even then continue because Nature continues and her activities ; but there is no longer any further object in these works. The sole reason for our continuing to act after liberation is purely negative ; it is the compulsion of Nature on our finite parts of mind and body. But if that be all, then, first, works may well be whittled down and reduced to a minimum, may be confined to what Nature's compulsion absolutely will have from our bodies ; and secondly, even if there is no reduction to a minimum,—since action does not matter and inaction also is no object,—then the nature of the work also does not matter. Arjuna, once having attained knowledge, may continue to fight out the battle of Kurukshetra, following his old Kshatriya nature, or he may leave it and live the life of the Sannyasin, following his new quietistic impulse. Which of these things he does, becomes quite indifferent ; or rather the second is the better way, since it will discourage more quickly the impulses of Nature which still have a hold on his mind owing to past created tendency and, when his body has

fallen from him, he will securely depart into the Infinite and Impersonal with no necessity of returning again to the trouble and madness of life in this transient and sorrowful world, *anityam asukham imam lokam*.

If this were so, the Gita would lose all its meaning and its whole object would be defeated. But the Gita insists that the nature of the action does matter and that there is a positive sanction for continuance in works, not only that one quite negative and mechanical reason, the objectless compulsion of Nature. There is still, after the ego has been conquered, a divine Lord and enjoyer of the sacrifice, *bhoktâram yajnatapasâm*, and there is still an object in the sacrifice. The impersonal Brahman is not the last word, not the highest secret of our being ; impersonal and personal, finite and infinite are only two opposite, yet concomitant aspects of the divine Being who is both these things at once. God is an ever unmanifest Infinite ever self-impelled to manifest himself in the finite ; he is the great impersonal Person of whom all personalities are partial appearances ; he is the Divine who reveals himself in the human being, he is the Lord seated in the heart of man. Knowledge teaches us to see all beings in the one impersonal self, and then through this impersonality to see them in this God, *atmani atho mayi*, "in the Self and then in Me." Our ego, our limiting personalities stand in the way of our recognising the Divine in all in whom all have their being ; for, subject to personality, we see only such fragmentary aspects of Him as the finite appearances of things suffer us to seize. We have to arrive at him not through our lower personality, but through the high, infinite and impersonal part of our being, through this self one in all in whose existence the whole world is comprised. This infinite containing, not excluding all finite appearances, this impersonal admitting, not rejecting all individualities and personalities, this immobile sustaining, pervading, containing, not standing apart from all the

movement of Nature, is the clear mirror in which the Divine will reveal His being. Therefore it is to the Impersonal that we have first to attain ; through the cosmic deities, through the aspects of the finite alone the perfect knowledge of God cannot be totally obtained. But neither is the silent immobility of the impersonal Self, apart from all that it sustains, contains and pervades, the whole satisfying truth of the Divine. That is the Purushottama, who possesses both the Akshara and the Kshara ; seated in the immobility, he manifests himself in the movement and action of cosmic Nature. To him even after liberation the sacrifice of works continues to be offered.

The real goal of the Yoga is then union with the divine Purushottama and not merely immergence in the impersonal Being. To raise our whole existence to the Divine Being, dwell in him, (*mayyeva nivasishyasi*), be at one with him, to unify our consciousness with his, to make our fragmentary nature a reflection of his perfect nature, to be inspired in our thought and sense wholly by the divine knowledge, to be moved in will and action utterly and faultlessly by the divine will, to lose desire in his love and delight, is man's perfection : it is that which the Gita describes as the highest secret. It is the true goal and the last sense of human living and the highest step in our progressive sacrifice of works.

---

# The Synthesis of Yoga

---

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE LADDER OF SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The transcendence of this lower triple being and this lower triple world, to which ordinarily our consciousness and its powers and results belong,—described by the Vedic seers as a breaking beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth,—opens out a field of being to which the normal existence of man even in its highest and widest flights is still a stranger and to that therefore it is difficult for him to rise. A separation, acute in practice though unreal in essence, divides the total being of man, the microcosm, divides also that of the world-being, the macrocosm. Both have a higher hemisphere of their existence marked away from a lower hemisphere; they are the *parardha* and *aparardha* of the ancient wisdom. The higher hemisphere is the perfect and eternal reign of the Spirit; there it manifests its infinities, deploys the glories of its illimitable being, illimitable consciousness and knowledge, illimitable force and power, illimitable delight. The lower hemisphere belongs equally to the Spirit, but here it is veiled, closely, thickly by its inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body. The Self is shrouded in name and form, its consciousness is broken up by the division between the internal and external, the individual and universal; its vision and sense are turned



outward; its force, limited by division of its consciousness, works in fetters; its knowledge, will, power, delight, divided therefore and limited, are open to the experience of their contrary or perverse forms, ignorance, weakness and suffering. We can always become aware of the Self or Spirit in ourselves by turning our sense and vision inward; we can discover the Self or Spirit in the external world and its phenomena by plunging them there too inward through the veil of names and forms to that which dwells in these or else stands behind. By so doing our normal consciousness may become by reflection aware of the infinite being, consciousness and delight of the Self and share in their passive or static infinity, but we can only to a very limited extent share in its active or dynamic manifestation of knowledge, power and joy. Even this cannot be effected without a long and difficult effort and as the result of many lives of progressive self-development; so much is our normal consciousness bound to the law of its lower hemisphere of being. To understand the possibility of transcending it, we must restate in a practical formula the relations of the worlds which constitute the two hemispheres.

All is determined by the Spirit, for all from being to matter is manifestation of the Spirit; but the Spirit, Self or Being determines the world it lives in and the experiences of its consciousness, force and delight in that world by some poise of the relations of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature, in one of other of its principles. Poised in the principle of Matter, it becomes the physical self of a physical universe in the reign of a physical Nature, Spirit absorbed in its experience of Matter, dominated by the ignorance and inertia of the tamsic principle proper to physical being. In the individual it becomes a materialised soul, *annamaya purusha*, whose life and mind have developed out of the ignorance and inertia of the material principle and are subject to their funda-

mental limitations ; for life works in dependence on the body, mind in dependence on the vital or nervous being, spirit itself is limited and divided in its self-realisation and its powers by the limitations and divisions of the Mind. This soul lives in a physical body and takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, senses, materialised life and mind and limited spiritual experience as the whole truth of existence.

Man also is a spirit living as a mental being in physical Nature, in a physical body ; but at first he is this mental being materialised and he thinks the materialised soul, *annamaya purusha*, to be his real self, takes, as the Upanishad expresses it, Matter for the Brahman because he sees that from that all is born, by that all lives and to that all return in their passing. His natural highest concept of Spirit is an Infinite inhabiting the material universe, which alone he knows, and manifesting by the power of its presence all its forms. His natural highest conception of himself is a vaguely conceived soul or spirit manifested only in his physical life's experiences, bound to that and on its dissolution returning to the Infinite. But because he has the power of self-development, he can rise beyond these natural conceptions of the materialised soul by a certain derivative experience from the supraphysical planes and worlds. He can concentrate on and develop the mental part of his being,—generally at the expense of this fullness of his vital and physical life,—until it predominates and is open to the beyond. He can concentrate on the Spirit,—and here too usually in the process he turns away more and more from his full mental and physical life and limits and discourages their possibilities as much as his nature will allow,—until his spiritual life predominates and destroys his earthward tendency. For that reason he places his real existence beyond in other worlds, in the heavens of the vital or mental being, and regards life on earth as

a painful or troublesome incident or passage in which he can never arrive at any full enjoyment of his ideal being. Moreover his highest ideal conception of the Self or Spirit is apt to be quietistic, because, as we have seen, it is its static infinity alone of Purusha unlimited by Prakriti which he can fully experience; its dynamic manifestation in him cannot rise entirely above the heavy limitations of physical Nature. The peace of the silent and passive Self is more easily attainable by him, more easily and fully held than the bliss of the infinite activity.

Poised in the principle of Life, the Spirit becomes the vital self of a vital world, the Life-soul of a Life-energy in the reign of a consciously dynamic Nature: it is absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life and dominated by the desire, activity and passion of the rajasic principle proper to vital being. In the individual it becomes a vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣha*, in whose nature the life-energies tyrannise over the mental and physical principles; the physical shapes its activities and formations in response to desire and its imaginations, to the passion and power of life and their formations,—not limiting them as on earth; the mental is limited by, obeys and helps to enrich and fulfil the life of the desires and impulses. This vital soul lives in a vital body composed of subtler matter than the physical, a substance surcharged with conscious energy and capable of much more powerful perceptions, capacities, sense-activities than the gross atomic elements of earth-matter can form. Man has in himself behind his physical being, very close to it, forming with it the most naturally active part of his existence, this vital soul, vital nature, vital body, a whole vital plane connected with the life-world or desire-world in which these principles find their untrammelled play, their easy self-expression.

In proportion as the power of this plane manifests

itself in the physical being, man becomes fuller of vital energy, forceful in his desires, vehement in his passions and emotions, intensely dynamic in his activities ; he becomes the rajasic man. We have seen that is possible for him to awaken in his consciousness to the vital plane, become the vital soul, *prāṇamaya* *śūnusha*, put on the vital nature, live in the vital as well as the physical body. If he did this fully,—usually it is under great and salutary limitations,—and without rising beyond, he would become the lower type of the Asura or Titan, a soul of sheer power and life-energy, full of the force of unlimited desire and passion, an active capacity and a colossal rajasic ego in possession of far greater and more various powers than those of the physical man. Even if he developed mind greatly on the vital plane and used its dynamic energy for self-control as well as for self-satisfaction, it would still be with an Asuric energism ( *tapasya* ) and for a more governed satisfaction of the rajasic ego. But on the vital plane also it is possible, even as on the physical, to rise beyond the conceptions and energies natural to the desire-soul and the desire-world, to develop a higher mentality and to concentrate upon realisation of the Spirit or Self within the conditions of the vital being and behind or beyond its forms and powers. In this spiritual realisation there would be a less strong necessity of quietism ; for there would be a greater possibility of the active effectuation of the bliss and power of the Infinite. Nevertheless that effectuality could never come anywhere near to perfection ; for the conditions of the desire-world are, like those of the physical, improper to the development of the perfect spiritual life. The vital being also must either develop spirit to the detriment of his fullness, activity and force of life in the lower hemisphere of our existence or else be subject in his activity to the downward attraction of the desire-world. On this plane also perfection is impossible; the soul that attains only so far would have

to return to the physical life for a greater experience and a higher self-development.

Poised in the principle of mind, the Spirit becomes the mental self of a mental world dwelling in the reign of a luminous mental Nature whose laws are those of the intellectual, psychic and higher emotional being dominated by the clarity and happiness of the sattwic principle proper to the mental existence. In the individual it becomes a mental soul, *manomaya purusha*, in whose nature the clarity and luminous power of the mind would rule and be able to determine entirely the forms of the body and the powers of the life; it would not be limited by life and obstructed by matter as upon the earth. This mental soul lives in a mental or subtle body which enjoys capacities of knowledge, perception, sympathy, interpenetration with other beings, a free, delicate and extensive sense-faculty far less limited than the grosser conditions of either the life nature or the physical nature can supply. Man too has in himself concealed behind his waking consciousness and visible organism this mental soul, mental nature, mental body and a mental plane, not materialised, in which its principles are at home and not as here at strife with a world which is alien to it, obstructive to its mental freedom, corruptive of its clearness and purity. All the higher faculties of man, his intellectual and psychical being and powers, his higher emotional life awaken and increase in proportion as this mental plane in him presses upon and manifests on the physical, enriches and elevates the corresponding mental plane of the physical being and gives a greater force to the mental being which our humanity really is in the most characteristic part of its nature.

It is possible for man to awaken to this higher mental consciousness, become this mental being, put on this mental nature, live in this mental body as well as in the vital and physical sheaths. In proportion to the complete-

ness of this transformation he would become capable of a life and a being at least half divine, he would enjoy powers and a vision and perceptions beyond the scope of this ordinary life and body, govern all by the clarities of pure knowledge, be united to other beings by a sympathy of love and happiness, the emotions lifted to the perfection of the psychical plane, the sensations delivered from grossness, the intellect subtle, pure and flexible, delivered from the obstructions of matter and the impure pranic energy. He would be able to develop too the reflection of a higher knowledge and joy than the mental, receive more fully the inspirations and intuitions of the supramental being and form his perfected mental existence in their light. He could realise too the self or Spirit in a much larger, more luminous, more intimate intensity and with a greater play of its active power and bliss in the harmony of his existence.

To our ordinary notions this would seem to be indeed the perfection to which man aspires in his highest flights of idealism and it would, no doubt, be the perfection of the mental being; but it would still not be the utmost perfection of the spiritual being. For here too the spiritual realisation would be subject to the limitations of the mind which is in its nature of a diffused or an intensive rather than a comprehensive luminosity and joy. The full light, the real bliss are beyond. Therefore either the self-perfecting mental being would have to depart into the pure spirit by the shedding of its lower existence or it must return to the physical life to develop a yet higher capacity. The Upanishad expresses this truth when it says that the heavens so attained are those to which man is lifted by the rays of the sun,—by which it means the diffused, separated, though intense beams of the supramental truth-consciousness,—and from these it has to return. But those who, renouncing earth-life, go beyond through the door of the sun itself, do not return.

Ordinarily the mental being so exceeding this sphere does not return because he enters a higher range of existence peculiar to the superior hemisphere of his being, whose pure spiritual nature he cannot bring into the lower triplicity in which the mental being is the highest expression of the Self and the triple mental, vital and physical body provides usually almost the whole range of our capacity.

It is only by rising into the knowledge-self beyond the mental, by becoming the knowledge-soul, *vijñāna-maya purusha*, by putting on the nature of its infinite truth of being, by living in the knowledge-sheath of the causal body as well as in the subtle mental and the grosser vital and physical bodies that man could draw down entirely into his terrestrial existence the fullness of the infinite spiritual consciousness or raise his total being into the spiritual realm. But this is difficult in the extreme because the causal body which opens itself readily to the consciousness and capacities of the spiritual planes and belongs in its nature to the higher hemisphere of existence, is not developed in him at all or only as yet crudely developed and organised. The plane of the truth-knowledge and the plane of the infinite bliss from which it draws the stuff of its being, pertain to the higher hemisphere. They shed upon the lower existence their truth and their joy and are the source of all that we call spirituality and all that we call perfection; but it is from behind thick veils through which they come so tempered and weakened that they are entirely obscured in the materiality of the physical being, grossly distorted and perverted in the vital, perverted too though less grossly in the lowest and minimised even in the comparative purity and intensity of the highest ranges of the mental existence. Their principle is secretly lodged in all existence, even in the grossest materiality, and preserves and governs the lower worlds by their hidden power and law; but that power

veils itself and that law works unseen through the limitations and deformations of the lesser law of our physical, vital, mental Nature. Yet their governing presence in the lowest forms assures us, because of the unity of all existence, of the possibility of their awakening and their perfect manifestation in spite of every veil and all the mass of our apparent disabilities.

The nature of these higher states of the soul and worlds of spiritual Nature are necessarily difficult to seize and even the Upanishads and the Veda only shadow them out by figures, hints and symbols. Yet it is necessary to attempt some account of their principles and practical effect so far as they can be seized by the mental being standing on the border of the two hemispheres, because the passage beyond the border is indicated to us as the completeness of the Yoga of self-transcendence by self-knowledge. The soul that aspires to perfection, ascends, says the Upanishad, from the physical Purusha into the vital, from the vital into the mental, from the mental into the knowledge-self, from the knowledge-self into the bliss-self ; this bliss-self is the foundation of the perfect Sachchidananda and to pass into it completes the ascension. We must see therefore what is meant by this transformation of the soul, this transfiguration of the Purusha.

---



# The Eternal Wisdom

## THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

FIRMNESS<sup>9</sup>

2,648

- 1 No compromises ; to live resolutely in integrity,  
plenitude and beauty.
- 2 The firmness of our resolution gives the measure  
of our progress and a great diligence is needed if one  
wishes to advance.
- 3 Circumstances, though they attack obstinately the  
4 man who is firm, cannot destroy his proper virtue,—  
firmness.—Stand firm therefore, having your loins  
girt about with truth and having on the breastplate  
of righteousness.
- 5 Be firm in the accomplishment of your duties, the  
6 great and the small,—Be ye steadfast, immovable.—
- 7 When you have seen your aim, hold to it, firm and  
unshakeable.
- 8 Turn not thy head from this path till thou art led  
to its end ; keep ever near to this door till it is open-  
ed. Let not thy eyes be shut : seek well and thou  
9 shalt find,—Seek wisdom carefully and she shall be  
uncovered to thee, and when once thou hast seen  
her, leave her not.
- 10 Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take  
thy crown.
- 11 Be thou faithful unto death,

---

<sup>9</sup> 1) Goethe.— 2) Imitation of Christ.— 3) Bhartrihari.—  
4) Ephesians, VI. 14.— 5) Buddhist Texts.— 6) 1 Corinthians XV.  
58.— 7) Dhammapadam.— 8) Farid-ud-din-attar.— 9) Ecclesiasti-  
cus VI. 28.— 10) Revelations III. 11.— 11) id. II. 10.

BOLDNESS<sup>oc</sup>

- 1 Watch ye, stand fast, quit you like men, be strong.  
 2 Be strong and of a good courage ; fear not.  
 3 Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble  
 4 knees.—Be strong ; fear not. ●  
 5-6 Man's first duty is to conquer fear.—A man's deeds  
 are slavish, his very thoughts false, so long as he has  
 not succeeded in putting fear under his feet.  
 7-8 In heaven fear is not.—The sage here surpasses  
 God. God fears nothing by the benefit of his na-  
 ture ; the sage fears nothing, but by the sole strength  
 of his spirit. This indeed is great, to have the weak-  
 ness of a mortal and yet the fearlessness of a god.  
 9 It is only the coward who appeals always to destiny  
 10 and never to courage.—Fortune fears the brave soul ;  
 she crushes the coward.  
 11 He who shows not zeal where zeal should be  
 shown, who young and strong gives himself up to  
 indolence, who lets his will and intelligence sleep,  
 that do-nothing, that coward shall not find the way  
 of the perfect knowledge.  
 12 It needs a lion-hearted man to travel the extra-  
 ordinary path ; for the way is long and the sea is  
 deep.  
 13 There are pearls in the depths of the ocean, but  
 one must dare all the perils of the deep to have them.  
 So is it with the Eternal in the world.  
 \*  
 \* \*  
 14 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.  
 15 —The more thou shalt advance, the more thy feet

<sup>oc</sup> 1) I Corinthians XVI. 13.— 2) Deuteronomy XXXI. 6.—  
 3) Hebrews III. 12.— 4) Isaiah XXXV. 4.— 5) Carlyle.—  
 6) id.— 7) Katha-Upanishad.— 8) Seneca.— 9) Ramayana.—  
 10) Seneca.— 11) Dhammapada 280.— 12) Farid-ul-din-attar.—  
 13) Ramakrishna.— 14) Revelations II. 10.— 15) Book of Golden  
 Precepts.

shall encounter bog and morass. The path which thou walkest, is lighted by one only fire, even the light of the audacity which burns in thy heart. The more thou shalt dare, the more thou shalt obtain.—

16-17 Go in this thy might.—Be not afraid, only believe.

18 —All things are possible to him that believeth.

19 I will trust and not be afraid.

# The Psychology of Social Development

---

## XIII

If reason is an insufficient, often an inefficient, often a stumbling, always a very partially enlightened guide for humanity in that great effort which is the real heart of human progress and the inner justification of our existence as souls, minds and bodies upon the earth,—the effort not only to survive and make a place for ourselves on the earth as the animals do, not only having made to keep it and make the best vital and egoistic use of it for the efficiency and enjoyment of the individual, family or collective ego, substantially as is done by the animal families and colonies, in bee-hive or ant-hill for example, though in the larger, many-sided way of reasoning animals, but to arrive at a harmonised inner and outer perfection which we find in the end to be the discovery of the divine Reality and the complete and ideal Person within us and the shaping of human life in that image,—then neither the Hellenic ideal of an all-round philosophic, aesthetic, moral and physical culture governed by the enlightened reason of man and led by the wisest minds of a free society, nor the modern ideal of an efficient culture governed by the collective reason and organised

knowledge of mankind can be either the highest or the widest goal of social development.

The Hellenic ideal was roughly expressed in the old Latin maxim, a sound mind in a sound body ; and by a sound body the ancients meant a healthy and beautiful body well-fitted for the rational use and enjoyment of life, by a sound mind a clear and balanced reason and an enlightened and well-trained mentality,—trained in the sense of ancient, not of modern education, not packed with all available information and ideas, cast in the mould of science and so prepared for the efficient performance of social and civic needs and duties, for a professional avocation or for an intellectual pursuit, but trained in all its human capacities intellectual, moral, aesthetic to be used rightly and to range, freely, intelligently, flexibly in all questions and in all practical matters of philosophy, science, art, politics and social living. The ancient Greek mind was philosophic, aesthetic and political ; the modern mind has been scientific, economic and utilitarian. The ancient ideal laid stress on soundness and beauty and sought to build up a fine and rational human life ; the modern lays very little or no stress on beauty, but prefers soundness and useful adaptation and seeks to build up a well-ordered, well-informed and efficient human life. Both take it that man is partly a mental, partly a physical being with the mentalised physical life as his field and reason his highest attribute and his highest possibility. But if we follow to the end the new vistas opened by the most advanced tendencies of a subjective age, we shall be led back to a still more ancient truth and ideal ; we shall seize the truth that man is a developing soul which is trying to find and fulfil itself in the forms of mind, life and body ; we shall perceive before us the ideal of a self-illuminated, self-possessing, self-mastering soul in a pure and perfect mind and body. The field it seeks will be not the mentalised physical life with which

man has started, but a spiritualised life inward and outward, by which the perfected internal figures itself in a perfected external living. Beyond man's long intelligent effort towards a perfected culture and a rational society there opens the old religious and spiritual ideal, the hope of the kingdom of heaven within us and the city of God upon earth.

But if the soul is the true sovereign and if its spiritual self-finding and integral fulfilment by the power of the spirit are to be accepted as the ultimate secret of our development, then since certainly the instinctive being of man below reason is not the means of attaining that high end and since we find that reason also is an insufficient light and power, there must be a superior range of being with its own proper powers,—liberated soul-faculties, a spiritual will and knowledge higher than the reason and intelligent will,—by which alone entire conscious self-fulfilment may become possible to the human being. We must remember that our self-fulfilment is an integral unfolding of the Divine within us in the individual soul and the collective life. Otherwise we may simply come back to an old idea of individual and social life which had its greatness, but did not provide all the conditions of our perfection. That was the idea of a spiritualised typical society. It proceeded upon the supposition that each man has his own peculiar nature which is born from and reflects one element of the divine nature; his character, ethical type, training, social occupation, spiritual possibility must be formed within the conditions of that peculiar element, the perfection we seek must be according to its law. The theory of the ancient Indian culture—its practice, as is the way of human practice, did not always correspond to the theory—worked upon this supposition. It divided man in society into the fourfold spiritual, ethical and economical order of the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra,—practically the spiritual and rational

man, the dynamic man of will, the vital, hedonistic and economic man, the material man ; the whole society represented the complete image of the creative and active Deity.

A different division of the typical society is quite possible. But whatever the arrangement or division, the typical principle is not that of the ideal human society. Even according to the Indian theory it does not belong either to the periods of man's highest or to those of his lowest possibility ; it is neither the principle of his ideal age, his age of the perfected Truth, Satyayuga, Kritayuga, in which he lives according to some high and profound realisation of his divine possibility, nor of his iron age, the Kali-Yuga, in which he collapses towards the life of the instincts, impulses and desires, with the reason serving this lower life of man. It is rather the appropriate principle of the intermediate ages of his cycle in which he attempts to maintain some imperfect form of his true law, his *dharma*, by will-power and force of character in the Treta, by law, arrangement and fixed convention in the Dwapara.\* The type is not the integral man, it is the fixing and emphasizing of the generally prominent part of his active nature. But each man contains in himself the whole divine potentiality and therefore the Shudra cannot be rigidly confined within his Shudrahood, nor the Brahmin in his Brahminhood, but each contains within himself the potentialities and the need of perfection of his other elements of a divine manhood. In the Kali age these may act in a state of crude disorder, the anarchy of our being which covers our confused attempt at a new order. In the intermediate ages the principle of order may take refuge in a limited perfection, suppressing some elements to perfect others.

\* Therefore it is said that Vishnu is the King in the Treta, but in the Dwapara the arranger and codifier of the knowledge and the law.

But the law of the Satya age is the large development of the whole truth of our being in the realisation of a spontaneous and self-supported spiritual harmony. That can only be realised by the development, in the measure of which our human capacity in its enlarging cycles becomes capable of it, of the spiritual ranges of our being and their inherent light and power, knowledge and divine capacities.

We shall better understand what may be this higher being and those higher faculties, if we look again at the dealings of the reason with the trend towards the absolute in our other faculties and the principles of our complex existence, its dealings with the suprarational in them and the infrarational, the two extremes between each our intelligence is some sort of mediator. The spiritual or suprarational is always turned at its heights towards the Absolute and in its extension, living in the luminous infinite, its power is to realise the infinite in the finite, the eternal unity in all divisions and differences. Our spiritual evolution ascends therefore through the relative to the absolute, through the finite to the infinite, through all divisions to unity ; our spiritual realisation will find and seize hold on the intensities of the absolute in the relative, the large and serene presence of the infinite in the finite, the law of a perfect unity in all divisions and differences ; it will effect the great reconciliation between the secret and eternal reality and the finite appearances of the world which seek to express, but in expressing seem to deny it. Equally then our highest faculties will be those which have in them the intimate light and power and joy by which these things can be grasped in direct knowledge and experience, realised and made normally and permanently effective in will, communicated to our whole being. The infra-rational on the other hand has its origin and basis in the obscure infinite of the subconscious ; it wells up in instincts and impulses, which are really the crude and more or less haphazard intuitions of the physical, vital,



emotional and sensational mind and will in us. Its struggle is towards definition, towards finding some finite order of its obscure knowledge and tendencies, but it has also the instinct and force of the infinite from which it proceeds, it contains obscure, limited and violent velleities towards grasping the intensities of the absolute in its finite activities : but because it proceeds by ignorance and not by knowledge, it cannot succeed. The life of the reason and intelligent will stands between, takes up and enlightens the life of the instincts and impulses and helps it to find on a higher plane the finite order for which it gropes. On the other side it looks up and out towards the absolute, infinite and one without being able to grasp its realities ; it is able only to consider them with a sort of derivative and remote understanding, because itself moving in the relative, limited and definite it can act only by definition, division and limitation. These three powers of being, the supra-rational, rational and infra-rational are present, but with an infinitely varying prominence in all our activities.

The limitations of the reason become very strikingly, very characteristically, nakedly apparent when it is confronted with that great order of psychological truths and experiences which we have hitherto kept in the background—the religious being of man and his religious life. Here is a realm at which the intellectual reason gazes with the bewildered eyes of a foreigner who hears a language of which the words and the spirit are unintelligible to him and sees everywhere forms of life and principles of thought and action which are absolutely strange to his experience. He may try to learn this speech and understand this strange and alien life, but it is with pain and difficulty, and he cannot succeed unless he has, so to speak, unlearned himself and become one in spirit and nature with the natives of this celestial empire. Till then his efforts to understand and interpret them in his own language and according to his own notions end at the

worst in a gross misunderstanding and deformation ; they sound to men of religious experience like the prattle of a child who is trying to shape into the mould of his own habitual notions the life of adults or the blunders of an ignorant mind which thinks fit to criticise patronisingly or adversely the labours of the profound thinker or the great scientist. At the best even they extract and account for only the externals of the things they attempt to explain ; the spirit is missed, the inner matter is left out and for that reason even the account of the externals is without real truth and has only an apparent correctness.

The unaided reason in face of what it calls the phenomena of the religious life, is naturally apt to adopt one of two attitudes, both of them shallow in the extreme, presumptuous and erroneous. Either it views the whole thing as a mass of superstition, a mystical nonsense, a farrago of ignorant barbaric survivals,—that was the extreme spirit of the rationalist now happily, though not dead, yet moribund,—or it patronises religion, tries to explain its origins, gently or forcefully to correct its superstitions, crudities, absurdities and purify it or persuade it to purify itself ; it allows it a role, leaves it perhaps for the edification of the ignorant, admits its value as a moralising influence or its utility to the State for keeping the lower classes in order, even perhaps tries to invent that strange chimera, a rational religion.

The former attitude has on its positive side played a powerful part in the history of human thought, has even been of a considerable utility in its own way,—we shall have to note briefly hereafter how and why,—to human progress and in the end to religion itself ; but its negation is an arrogant falsity, as the human mind has now sufficiently begun to perceive. Its mistake is like that of the foreigner who thinks everything in an alien country absurd and inferior because these things are not his ways of acting and thinking and cannot be cut out by his

measures or suited to his standards. So the thoroughgoing rationalist asks the religious spirit, if it is to stand, to satisfy the material reason and even to give physical proof of its truths, while the very essence of religion is the discovery of the immaterial Spirit and the play of a supra-physical consciousness. So too he tries to judge religion by his idea of its externalities, just as an obstreperous foreigner might try to judge a civilisation by the dress, outward colour of life and some of the most external peculiarities in the social manners of the inhabitants; that in this he errs in company with certain of the so-called religious themselves, may be his excuse, but cannot be the justification of his ignorance. The more moderate attitude of the rational mind has also played its part in the history of human thought. Its attempts to explain religion have resulted in the compilation of an immense mass of amazingly ingenious perversions, such as certain pseudo-scientific attempts to form a comparative Science of Religion, which have built up in the approved style immense façades of theory with stray bricks of misunderstood facts for their material. Its mild condonations of religion have led to superficial phases of thought which have passed quickly away. Its efforts at the creation of a rational religion, perfectly well-intentioned, but helpless and unconvincing, have had no appreciable effect and have failed like a dispersing cloud, *chhinuābhra iva nashyati*.

The essence of religion, apart from its outward machinery of creed, cult, ceremony and symbol, is the search for and the finding of God, the infinite, absolute, one, divine who is all these things and yet no abstraction but a Being, and the living out of the relations between man and God, relations of unity, relations of difference, relations of an illuminated knowledge, an ecstatic love and delight, an absolute surrender and service, a casting of every part of our existence out of its normal

status into an uprush of man towards the Divine which brings a descent of the Divine into man. All this has nothing to do with the realm of reason or its normal activities ; its aim, its sphere, its process is suprarational. The knowledge of God is not to be gained by weighing the feeble arguments of reason for or against his existence : it is to be gained only by a self-transcending and absolute consecration, aspiration and experience. Nor does that experience proceed by anything like rational scientific experiment or rational philosophic thinking. Even in those parts of religious discipline which seem most to resemble scientific experiment, the method is a verification of things which exceed the reason and its timid scope ; and even in those parts of religious knowledge which seem most to resemble intellectual operations, the illuminating faculties are not imagination, logic and rational judgment, but revelations, inspirations, intuitions, intuitive discernments which come from a plane of suprarational light. The love of God is an infinite and absolute feeling which does not admit of any rational limitation and does not use a language of rational worship and adoration ; the delight in God is that peace and bliss which passes all understanding. The surrender to God is the surrender of the whole being to a suprarational light, will, power and love and his service takes no account of the compromises with life which the practical reason of man uses as the best part of its method in the ordinary conduct of mundane existence. Wherever religion really finds itself, —there is plenty of that sort of religious practice which is halting, imperfect, half-sincere, only half-sure of itself and in which reason can get in a word,—its way is absolute and its fruits are ineffable.

Reason has indeed a part to play in relation to this highest field of our religious being and experience, but that part is quite secondary. It cannot lay down the law for the religious life, it cannot determine in its own right

the system of divine knowledge; it cannot school and lesson the divine love and delight ; it cannot set bounds to spiritual experience or lay its yoke upon the action of the spiritual man. Its sole part is to explain as best it can in its own language to the intellectual part of man the truths, the experiences, the laws of our supra-rational and spiritual existence ; that has been the work of religious philosophy in the East and of theology in the West, a work of great importance at moments like the present when the intellect of mankind after a long wandering is again turning towards the search for the Divine. Here there must inevitably enter a part of those operations proper to the intellect, logical reasoning, inferences from the data given by rational experience and knowledge of the apparent facts of existence, appeals even to the physical truths of science and all the apparatus of the intelligent mind in its ordinary workings. But this is the weakest part of religious philosophy. It does not convince the rational mind unless it is predisposed to belief, or even if it convinces, it certainly cannot give it the knowledge. Reason is safest when it is content with taking the truths and experiences of the spiritual being and the spiritual life, just as they are given to it, and throwing them into such form, order and language as will make them the most intelligible to the reasoning mind. Even then it is not quite safe, for it is apt to harden the order into an intellectual system, to present the form as if it were the essence and, at best, it has to use a language which is not the tongue of the supra-rational truth itself, but its translation and, not being either the ordinary tongue of the rational intelligence, is open to non-understanding or misunderstanding by the ordinary reason of mankind. It is well-known to the experience of the spiritual seeker that religious philosophy cannot give the knowledge; all it can do, is to address the intellect and when it has done, to say, "I have tried to give you the truth in

a form and system which will make it intelligible and possible to you ; if you are intellectually convinced or attracted, you must now seek the real knowledge by other means which are beyond my province."

But there is another level of the religious life in which reason might seem justified in interfering more independently. For as there is the supra-rational life in which religious aspiration finds entirely what it seeks, so there is also the infrarational life of the instincts, impulses, sensations, crude emotions, vital activities from which all human aspiration takes its beginning. These too feel the touch of the religious sense in man, share its needs and experience, desire its satisfactions. Religion includes this satisfaction also in its scope, and in what is usually called religion, it seems even to be the greater part, sometimes even to an external view almost the whole ; for the supreme purity of spiritual experience does not appear or is glimpsed only through this mixed and turbid current. Much impurity, ignorance, superstition, many doubtful elements must form as the result of this contact and union of our highest tendencies with our lower ignorant being. Here it would seem that reason has its legitimate part, that of enlightening, purifying, rationalising the play of the instincts and impulses. It would seem that a religious reformation substituting a "pure" and rational religion for one of that is largely infrarational and impure, would be a distinct advance in the religious development of humanity. To a certain extent this is so, but, owing to the peculiar nature of the religious being, its entire urge towards the supra-rational, not without serious qualifications.

There are religious forms and systems which become effete and corrupt and have to be destroyed, others which lose much of their inner sense and become clouded in knowledge and injurious in practice ; in destroying these or in negating their aberrations reason has

played an important part in religious history. But in getting rid of the superstition and ignorance which have attached themselves to religious forms and symbols reason tends to deny and, so far as it can, to destroy the truth and the experience which was contained in them. Reformations which give too much to reason and are too negative and protestant, usually create religions which lack in wealth of spirituality and fullness of religious emotion; they are not opulent in their contents; their form and too often their spirit is impoverished, bare and cold. Nor are they really rational; for they live not by their reason, which to the rational mind is as irrational as that of the creeds they replace, still less by their negations, but by their positive quantum of faith and fervour which is supra-rational in its whole aim and has too its infrarational elements. If these seem less gross to the ordinary mind, it is often because they are more timid in venturing into the realm of suprarational experience. The life of the instincts and impulses on its religious side cannot be satisfyingly purified by reason, but rather by being sublimated, by being lifted up into the illuminations of the spirit. The natural line of religious development proceeds always by illumination; and religious reformation acts best either by reilluminating instead of destroying old forms or, when destruction is necessary, by replacing them with richer and not poorer forms, purified by suprarational illumination, not by rational enlightenment. A purely rational religion could only be a cold and bare Deism, and such attempts have always failed to achieve vitality and permanence; for they act contrary to the *dharma*, the natural law and spirit of religion. If reason is to play any part, it must be an intuitive rather than an intellectual reason, touched always by spiritual intensity and insight.

For the relations of the spirit and the reason need not be, as they too often are in our practice, hostile or with-

out any point of contact. Religion itself need not adopt for its principle the formula "I believe because it is impossible " or Pascal's " I believe because it is absurd." What is impossible or absurd to the unaided reason, becomes real and right to the reason lifted beyond itself by the power of the spirit and irradiated by its light. For then it is dominated by the intuitive mind which is our means of passage to a yet higher principle of knowledge. The widest spirituality does not exclude or discourage any essential human activity or faculty, but lifts them all up out of their imperfection and groping ignorance and makes them the instruments of the light, power and joy of the divine being.

---



# Hymns of the Atris

---

## THE EIGHTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

### THE HOLDERS OF THE LUMINOUS WORLDS

[The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna as the upholders of the worlds or planes of being, especially the three luminous worlds in which the triple mental, the triple vital, the triple physical find the light of their truth and the divine law of their powers. The strength of the Aryan warrior is increased by them and guarded in that imperishable law. From the luminous worlds the rivers of the truth descend with their yield of bliss. In each of them a luminous Purusha fertilises a form of the triple thought-consciousness of the Truth ; these, which make the luminous day of the soul, found in man the divine and infinite consciousness and in that the divine peace and the activity by which in the extended universality of our being there is the rich felicity and the creation of the godhead. The divine workings are impaired and restricted by the gods in the ordinary life of the vital and the physical being, but when Mitra and Varuna uphold in us the luminous worlds in which each of these finds its truth and power, they become complete and firm for ever. ]

1. Three worlds of the Light you two uphold,  
O Varuna, three heavens, three mid-worlds, O Mitra,  
and you increase the might of the Warrior and guard

him in the imperishable law of your working.

2. Your fostering cows 1 have their streams, O Varuna, O Mitra, the rivers milk out their honeyed yield. There stand wide three luminous Bulls 2 and cast their seed into the three Thoughts.

3. In the dawn I call to the divine Mother infinite, in the mid-day and at the rising of the sun. I desire of Mitra and Varuna the peace and the movement in the forming of the all 3 for felicity and for the creation and the begetting. 4

4. Because you are the upholders of the luminous sphere of the mid-world and the luminous sphere of the earth, O divine Sons of Infinity, O Mitra and Varuna, the immortal gods impair not your workings which are firm for ever. 6

1. *Dhenavah*, the rivers of the Truth, as *gârah*, the luminous cows, are the rays of its light. 2. The Bull is the Purusha, soul or conscious being; the Cow is the Prakriti, the power of consciousness. The creation of the godhead, the Son, comes by the fertilising of the triple luminous consciousness by the triple luminous soul of the Truth-being so that that higher consciousness becomes active, creative and fruitful in man. 3. The action of the sacrifice consists in the formation or "extension" of the universal being, *sarvatâti*, and of the divine being, *devatâti*. 4. Of the Son, the godhead created within the humanity. 6. That is, in the ordinary workings of the life-plane and the material plane, because they are unilluminated, full of ignorance and defect, the law of our divine and infinite being is impaired or spoiled, works under restrictions and with perversions; it manifests fully, steadfastly and faultlessly only when the ideal, supramental truth-plane is upheld in us by the pure wideness and harmony of Varuna and Mitra and takes up the vital and the physical consciousness into its power and light.

## THE NINTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

### THE INCREASESERS OF BEING AND DELIVERERS

[ The Rishi desires the wide and multiple fostering of our being and its powers which Varuna and Mitra give and their complete impulsion of our strength towards the perfect foundation of the divine status. He prays to them to protect and deliver him from the Destroyers and prevent their adverse control from impairing the growth of the godhead in our various sheaths or bodies. ]

1. Multiple indeed by the wideness 1 is now your fostering of our being, O Varuna. O Mitra, I would enjoy your perfect-mindedness.

2. You are they who betray not to harm; 2 may we enjoy your complete force of impulsion for our founding; may we be they, O you violent godheads.

3. Protect us, O violent ones, 3 with your protectings and deliver us with a perfect deliverance. May we in our embodyings break through the Destroyers.

4. O transcendent in will-power, let us not in our embodyings suffer the control of any, 4 nor in our begetting, nor our creation.

1. The wideness of the infinite Truth-plane with the manifold wealth of its spiritual contents. Its condition is the perfection of the thought-mind and psychic mentality proper to a divine nature, which comes to man as the grace of the gods, *sumati*. 2. The harms of the Dasyus, destroyers of our being and enemies of its divine progress, the sons of Limitation and Ignorance. 3. Rudras. Rudra is the Divine as the master of our evolution by violence and battle, smiting and destroying the Sons of Darkness and the evil they create in man. Varuna and Mitra as helpers in the upward struggle against the Dasyus assume this Rudrahood. 4. That is, any of the Destroyers.

## THE TENTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

## AN INVOCATION TO THE SACRIFICE

[ The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna to the Soma offering as destroyers of the enemy and greateners of our being and as helpers of our thoughts by their mastery and wisdom. ]

1. O destroyers of the Enemy, come with your greatenings, O Varuna, O Mitra, to this our delightful sacrifice.

2. O Varuna, O Mitra, you govern every man and are the wise thinkers ; you are the rulers, nourish our thoughts.

3. Come, O Varuna. O Mitra, to our Soma offering, to the sacrifice of the giver, that you may drink of this wine.

1. By destroying the enemy, the hurters, who pervert and diminish our being, will and knowledge, they increase in us the largenesses proper to the "vast Truth." When they govern, the control of the Dasyus is removed and the knowledge of the Truth increases in our thoughts.

## THE ELEVENTH HYMN TO MITRA-VARUNA

## AN INVOCATION TO THE SACRIFICE

[ The Rishi invokes Mitra and Varuna to the sacrifice as the godheads who lead man on the path according to the law of the truth and confirm our spiritual gains by its workings. ]

1. With the words we sacrifice to Mitra and to Varuna as the Atri.

---

*Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine.*

2. By your working you keep firm the gettings of good and you make men to walk the path by your law.

*Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine.*

3. May Mitra and Varuna take delight in our sacrifice that we may have our desire.

*Sit on the seat of the largeness for the drinking of the wine.*

---

# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## XXIV

In the process of centralisation of all the powers of an organised community in a sovereign governing body which has been the prominent feature of national formations, the largest overt part has been played by military necessity. This military necessity was both external and internal. The external, the defence of the nation against disruption or subjection from without, is strongest, but the defence against internal disruption and disorder is also an imperative necessity. To bind together the constituent parts of a nation forming or already formed, a common administrative authority is essential, and this was the part played by the monarchy ; but the first need and claim of the central authority is to be able to prevent dissidence, strife and the weakening or breaking up of the organic formation. The monarchy or other central body may effect this end partly by moral force and psychological suggestion ; it stands as the symbol of union and imposes respect for their visible and consecrated unity on the constituent parts, however strong may be their local, racial, clan or class instincts of separatism ; it represents the united authority of the nation imposing its moral force as greater than the moral right of the separate parts, even if they be something like sub-nations, and commanding their obedience. But in the last resort, since these motives

may at any moment fail when revolting interests or sentiments are strong and passions run high, the governing body must have always the greatest military force at its command so as to overawe them and prevent the outbreak of a disruptive civil war. Or if the civil war or rebellion comes about,—as is likely to happen especially if the monarchy or the governing body is identified closely with one of the parties in a quarrel, as in the American war of secession, or is itself the subject of attack,—then it must have so great a predominance of force behind it as to be morally sure of victory in the conflict. This can only be secured to the best possible perfection,—it cannot be done absolutely except by an effective disarmament,—if the whole military authority is centred in and the whole actual or potential military force of the society subjected to the central body.

In the trend to the formation of the world-State, however vague and formless it may yet be, we see that the same large part is being played by the element of military necessity. The peoples of the world already possess a loose and chaotic unity of life in which none can any longer lead an isolated, independent and self-dependent existence, but each feels in its culture, political tendencies, economical existence the influence and repercussion of events and movements in other parts of the world ; each feels subtly or directly its separate life overshadowed by the life of the whole. Science, international commerce and the political and cultural penetration of Asia and Africa by the dominant West have been the agents of this great change. Even in this loose unity the occurrence or the possibility of great wars has become a powerful element of disturbance to the whole fabric. Even before the European war, the necessity of avoiding or minimising any such disturbance was keenly felt and various well-intentioned, but feeble and blundering devices were being tentatively introduced which had that

end in view. Had any of these makeshifts been tolerably effective, the world might long have remained content with its present conditions and the pressing need of a closer international organisation would not have enforced itself on the general mind of the race. But the European collision has rendered the indefinite continuance of the old chaotic regime impossible. The necessity of avoiding any repetition of the catastrophe is universally acknowledged. A means of keeping international peace, of creating an authority which shall have the power to dispose of dangerous international questions and preventing what from the new point of view of human unity we may call civil war between the peoples of mankind, has somehow or other to be found or created.

Various ideas have been put forward with more or less authority as to the necessary conditions of international peace. The crudest of these is that which supposes the destruction of German militarism to be the one thing needful and sufficient to secure the future peace of the world. The military power, the political and commercial ambitions of Germany and her sense of being thwarted by her confined geographical position and her encirclement by an unfriendly alliance were, no doubt, the immediate moral cause of this particular war ; but the real cause lay in the very nature of the international situation and the psychology of national life. The chief feature of that psychology is the predominance and worship of national egoism under the sacred name of patriotism. Every national ego, like every organic life, desires naturally a double self-fulfilment, intensive and extensive or expansive, a deepening and enriching of its culture, political strength, economical well-being within and, without, an extension or expansion of its culture, its political extent, dominion, power or influence and its commercial exploitation of the world. To a certain extent only this natural and instinctive desire, which is not an abnormal moral



depravity, but the very instinct of egoistic life,—and what life at present is not egoistic?—can be satisfied by peaceful means. But where it feels itself hemmed in by obstacles that it thinks it can overcome, opposed by barriers, encircled, dissatisfied with a share of possession and domination it considers disproportionate to its needs and its strength, or where new possibilities of expansion open out to it in which only its strength can obtain for it its desirable portion, it is at once moved to the use of some kind of force and can only be restrained by the amount of resistance it is likely to meet. If it has only a weak opposition of unorganised or ill-organised peoples to overcome, it will not hesitate; if it has the opposition of powerful rivals to fear, it will pause, seek for alliances, watch for its moment. Germany had not the monopoly of this expansive instinct of egoism; only its egoism was the best organised and least satisfied, the youngest, crudest, hungriest, most self-confident and presumptuous, most satisfied with the self-righteous finality of its desires. The breaking of German militarism may ease the situation, but it will not cure it. So long as any kind of militarism remains, so long as fields of expansion remain, so long as national egoisms remain and there is no final check on their inherent instinct of expansion, war will be always a possibility and almost a necessity.

Another idea put forward with great authorities behind it is a league of free and democratic nations to keep the peace, by the use of force if needs be. If less crude, this solution is not for that any the more satisfactory. It is an old idea, the idea Metternich put in practice after the overthrow of Napoleon; only in place of a dynastic Holy Alliance of monarchs to maintain peace and monarchical order and keep down democracy, it is proposed to have a league of free—and imperial—peoples to maintain peace and enforce democracy. One thing alone is perfectly sure that the new league would go the way of the old;

it would break up as soon as the interests and ambitions of the constituent powers became sufficiently disunited or a new situation arose such as was created by the violent resurgence of oppressed democracy in 1848, such as would be created by the inevitable future struggle between the young Titan, Socialism, and the old Olympian gods of a bourgeois world ; we see indeed the struggle already obscurely outlining itself in revolutionary Russia and it cannot be very long delayed throughout Europe, for the war which has momentarily suspended, may very well turn out to have really precipitated its advent and accentuated its force. By one cause or the other or by both in union dissolution would be certain. No league can be permanent in its nature ; the ideas which supported it, change ; the interests which made it possible and effective, become fatally modified or obsolete.

The supposition is that democracies will be less ready to go to war than monarchies ; but this is only true within a certain measure. What are now called democracies, are bourgeois States in the form either of a constitutional monarchy or a middle-class republic. In each of them the middle class has taken over with certain modifications the diplomatic habits, foreign policies and other international ideas of the monarchical or aristocratic governments which preceded them. This seems to have been a natural law of their mentality. For we see in Germany, not yet a democracy, that it is the aristocratic and the capitalist class combined who constitute the Pan-German party with its exaggerated and almost insane ambitions. In the new Russia the bourgeoisie have rejected the political ideas of the Czardom in internal affairs and helped to overturn autocracy, but they preserve its ideas in external affairs minus the German influence and stand for the expansion of Russia and the possession of Constantinople. Certainly, there is an important difference. In the first place, the monarchical or aristocratic State is political in its menta-

lity and seeks first of all territorial aggrandisement and political predominance or hegemony among the nations, commercial aims are with it only a secondary preoccupation ; with the bourgeois State the order is reversed, it has its eye partly on political aggrandisement, but chiefly on the possession of markets, the command of new fields of wealth, the formation or conquest of colonies or dependencies which can be commercially and industrially exploited. In the second place, the monarchical or aristocratic statesman turns to war as almost his first expedient, as soon as he is dissatisfied with the response to his diplomacy ; the bourgeois statesman hesitates, calculates, gives a longer rope to diplomacy, tries to gain his ends by bargainings, arrangements, peaceful pressure, demonstrations of power and resorts to war only when these expedients have failed him and only if the end seems commensurate with the means and the great speculation of war promises a very strong chance of success. On the other hand the bourgeois democratic state has developed a stupendous military organisation of which the most powerful monarchs and aristocracies could not dream ; and if this tends to delay the outbreak of large wars, it tends too to make their final advent sure and their proportions great.

There is indeed the suggestion that a more truly democratic and therefore a more peaceful spirit and more thoroughly democratic institutions will reign after the war by the triumph of the liberal nations and that, in addition, one rule of the new international situation will be the right of nations to dispose of their own destinies and be governed only by their free consent. The latter condition is impossible of immediate fulfilment except in Europe, and even for Europe the principle is not really recognised in its totality. If it were capable of universal application, if the existing relations of peoples and the psychology of nations could be so altered as to establish it as a working principle, one of the most fertile causes of war and revo-

lution would disappear, but all causes would not be removed. Nor does the greater democratisation of the European peoples afford a sure guarantee. Certainly, democracy of a certain kind, democracy reposing for its natural constitution on individual liberty would be likely to be indisposed to war except in moments of great and universal excitement. War demands a violent concentration of all the forces, a spirit of submission, a suspension of free-will, free action and of the right of criticism which is alien to the true instincts of democracy. But the democracies of the future are likely to be strongly concentrated governments in which the principle of liberty is subordinated to the efficient life of the community by some form of State socialism. Such a democratic State might well have even a greater power for war, might be able to put forward a more violently concentrated military organisation in event of hostilities than even the present bourgeois democracies, and it is not certain that it would be less tempted to use them. At present Socialism is pacific in its tendencies, largely because the necessity of preparation for war is favourable to the rule of the upper classes and war itself used in the interest of the governments and the capitalists, while the ideas and classes it represents are at present depressed and do not grow by the uses or share visibly in the profits of war. What will happen when they have hold of the government and its temptations and opportunities, remains to be seen. The possession of power is the great test of all idealisms, and as yet there have been none religious or secular which have withstood it or escaped diminution and corruption.

To rely upon the common consent of conflicting national egoisms for the preservation of peace between the nations is to rely upon a logical contradiction and a practical improbability which, if we can judge by reason and experience, amounts to an impossibility. A League of Peace can only prevent armed strife for a time. A

system of enforced arbitration even with the threat of a large armed combination against the offender may minimise the chance of war, may absolutely forbid it to the smaller or weaker nations ; but a great nation which sees a chance of making itself the centre of a strong combination of peoples interested in upsetting the settled order of things for their own benefit, might always choose to take the risks of the adventure in the hope of snatching advantages which in its estimation outweighed the risks. Moreover, in times of great upheaval and movement when large ideas, enormous interests and inflamed passions divide the peoples of the world, the whole system would be likely to break down ; the very elements of its efficacy would cease to exist. Any such tentative and imperfect device would be bound before long to disclose its inefficacy and either the attempt at a deliberate organisation of international life would have to be abandoned and the work left to be wrought out confusedly by the force of events, or else the creation of a real, effective and powerful authority must be attempted which would stand for the general sense and the general power of mankind in its collective life and spirit and be something more than a bundle of vigorously separate States loosely tied together by the frail bond of a violable moral agreement. Whether such an authority can really be created by agreement, whether it must not rather create itself partly by the growth of ideas, but still more by the shock of forces, is a question to which only the future can reply.

Such an authority would have to command the psychological assent of mankind and exercise a moral force upon the nations greater than that of their own national authority and commanding more readily their obedience under all normal circumstances. It would have to be a symbol of human unity and make itself constantly serviceable to the world by assuring the effective maintenance and development of large common interests

which would outweigh all separate national interests and satisfactions even in the estimation of the separate nations themselves. It must help more and more to fix the growing sense of a common humanity and a common life of mankind in which the sharp divisions which separate country from country, race from race, colour from colour, continent from continent would gradually lose their force and undergo a progressive effacement. Given these conditions, it would develop a moral authority which would enable it to pursue with less and less opposition and friction the unification of mankind. The nature of the psychological assent it secured from the beginning would depend largely on its constitution and character and would in its turn determine both the nature and power of the moral authority it exercised. If its constitution and character were such as to conciliate the sentiment and interest in its maintenance the active support of all or most of the different sections of mankind or at least those whose sentiment and support counted powerfully and to represent the leading political, social, cultural ideas and interests of the time, it would have the maximum of psychological assent and moral authority and its way would be comparatively smooth. If defective in these respects, it would have to make up the deficiency by a greater concentration and show of military force at its back and by extraordinary and striking services to the general life, culture and development of the human race such as assured for the Roman imperial authority the long and general assent of the Mediterranean and Western peoples to the subjection and obliteration of their national existence.

But in either case the possession and concentration of military power would be for long the first condition of its security, and this possession would have to be, as soon as possible, a sole possession. It is difficult at present to foresee the consent of the nations of the world to their

own disarmament. For so long as strong national egoisms of any kind remained and along with them mutual distrust, the nations would not sacrifice their possession of an armed force on which they could rely for self-defence if their interests, or at least those that they considered essential to their existence and prosperity, came to be threatened. Any distrust of the assured impartiality of the international government would operate in the same direction. Yet such a disarmament would be essential to the assured cessation of war—in the absence of some great and radical psychological and moral change in humanity. So long as national armies exist the possibility of war will exist. With their continued existence, however small in times of peace, an international authority even with a military force of its own behind it, would be in the position of the feudal king never quite sure of his effective control over his vassals. The international authority would have to hold under its command the sole trained military force in the world for the policing of the nations and also,—otherwise the monopoly would be ineffective,—the sole disposal of the means of manufacturing arms and implements of war; national and private munition factories and arms factories would have to disappear.

Such a consummation would mark definitely the creation of a world-State in place of the present international conditions; for it could not really be done unless the international authority became not merely the arbiter of disputes, but the source of law and the final power behind their execution. For that execution against recalcitrant countries or classes, for the prevention of all kinds of strife not merely political, but commercial, industrial and others or of their decision by other than the way of law and arbitration, for the suppression of any attempt at violent change and revolution the world-State, even at its strongest, would still need the concentration of all force in its own hands. So long as man remains what he is force,

in spite of all idealisms and generous pacific hopes, must remain the ultimate arbiter and governor of his life and its possessor the real ruler. It may veil its crude presence at ordinary times and take only mild and civilised forms,—mild in comparison, for are not the jail and the executioner still the two great pillars of the social order? —but it is there silently upholding the specious appearances of our civilisation and ready to intervene, whenever called upon, in the workings of the fairer but still feebler gods of the social cosmos. Diffused, force fulfils the free workings of Nature and is the servant of life but also of discord and struggle; concentrated, it becomes the guarantee of organisation and the bond of order.

---



## Thoughts and Glimpses

---

Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind.

The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation ; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore, but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly : neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

The hand of the divine Artist works often as if it were unsure of its genius and its material. It seems to touch and test and leave, to pick up and throw away and pick up again, to labour and fail and botch and repiece together. Surprises and disappointments are the order of his work before a'l things are ready. What was selected, is cast away into the abyss of reprobation ; what was rejected, becomes the corner-stone of a mighty edifice. But behind all this is the sure eye of a knowledge which surpasses our reason and the slow smile of an infinite ability.

God has all time before him and does not need to be always in a hurry. He is sure of his aim and success and cares not if he break his work a hundred times to bring

it nearer perfection. Patience is our first great necessary lesson, but not the dull slowness to move of the timid, the sceptical, the weary, the slothful, the unambitious or the weakling ; a patience full of a calm and gathering strength which watches and prepares itself for the hour of swift great strokes, few but enough to change destiny.

Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace ? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped : as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses.

Wherefore he selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from ? Because of his divine Idea which saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty.

\*  
\* \*

All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised ; but his nature mental and physical is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfections.

The Spirit is the truth of our being ; mind and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough ; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way of salvation.

The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are

infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.

If the triple change could coincide in a perfect correspondence, a faultless work would be done ; but the mind and body of mankind cannot hold perfectly a strong spiritual inrush : most is spilt, much of the rest is corrupted. Many intellectual and physical upturnings of our soil are needed to work out a little result from a large spiritual sowing.

Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection ; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity ; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer, Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God ; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other ; but intellectual dogma and cult egoism stand in the way.

All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.

The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention : the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretation of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity.

---

# आय

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th September 1917

### CONTENTS

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Ch. XXXVII. From the Undivine to the Divine	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Principle of Divine Works	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXIV. Vijnana or Gnosis	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
The Practice of the Truth— Simplicity: Modesty	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT XIV	
HYMNS OF THE ATRIS.....	A. G.
Hymn to Varuna	
(1) The Omniscient Creator	
(2) The Mighty Master of Infinite Wisdom	
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXV	
THE VEDIC FIRE	



# **The Life Divine**

## **CHAPTER XXXVII**

---

### **FROM THE UNDIVINE TO THE DIVINE**

But still in what sense have we to take this distinction of a divine life as opposed to an undivine, and should we not rather speak of an ascent from level to higher level of a divine manifestation? Essentially, no doubt, such ascent is the nature of the change, the evolution we undergo and so the impartial eye of a universal vision participating in the untrammelled being, consciousness and delight of Sachchidananda would see and judge it. Still, not from the essential, but from the practical and relative point of view the distinction between the divine and the undivine has a real value and truth and is even the one great truth with which the evolution is eventually concerned. To pass over the line which divides the double status and dwell in that to which we at present only aspire, is the critical and decisive step towards which all the great and manifold effort of the evolution is labouring in the series of its definitive stages and its irretraceable revolutions as in its cycles of tentative advance and recoil.

The distinction, when we go to its fundamental realities, rests upon two different principles of status; one is

the basis of a perpetual bondage to imperfection, the other the ground from which freedom and perfection naturally flower and can grow progressively towards their highest stature and their most fertile richness. Ordinarily, when we make the distinction, we, as human beings struggling under the pressure of life and among the difficulties of our conduct amidst the problems and perplexities of life, think most of the distinction we have to make between good and evil or of that and its kindred problem of happiness and suffering. When we seek intellectually for a divine presence in things, a divine origin of the world, a divine government of its workings, the presence of evil, the presence of suffering and the large, the enormous part played by pain, grief and affliction in the economy of Nature are the cruel phenomena which baffle our reason and stagger the instinctive faith of mankind in an all-seeing, all-determining and omnipresent Divinity. Other difficulties we could make shift to solve more easily and happily and be better satisfied with the ready conclusiveness of our solutions. But evil and suffering are only a striking aspect, not the root of the matter. Besides the deficiency or fall from good in the world and besides the failure to achieve happiness and overcome suffering, the fall from Delight, there is the deficiency or fall from other divine degrees, Knowledge, Truth, Beauty, Power, Unity ; all these in their absolute are elements of the Divine not less than absolute Good and absolute Delight.

Therefore the undivine consists not radically in moral evil or sensational suffering,—they are only two strong results of a common principle,—but in a general principle of imperfection. But when we look closely at this imperfection and study it, we see that it consists in limitation and a various, many-branching distortion, perversion, fall from an ideal Truth of being which we can conceive but fail to achieve; it is a lapse from an ideal consciousness and knowledge, delight, love and

beauty, power and conscious capacity, harmony and good. Again, when we look and study the cause of the fall, we see that all this proceeds from the primal fact that our being, consciousness, force, experience represent a principle of division in the unity of the divine being, which becomes in its inevitable practical effect a limitation of the divine consciousness and knowledge, the divine delight and beauty, the divine power and capacity, the divine harmony and good.

When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we may mean, first, that in its essentiality all is divine or, to put it in a form which appeals more to our psychological sense of the universe, that in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality, called by us variously Self, God or Brahman, which is ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite, its infinity not affected by the limitations of relative things, its purity by sin and evil, its bliss by pain and suffering, its perfection by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity. So the Upanishad describes the divine Purusha as the one Fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, the one Sun which illumines all impartially, but is not affected by the faults of our seeing. But this perception is not enough, since it leaves the problem unsolved why that which is ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite in itself should be in its manifestation so full of impurity, imperfection, suffering and limitation.

If we simply leave these two dissonant facts of existence standing, we are driven either to say that there is no reconciliation possible,—and then all we can do is to cling as much as we can to a deepening sense of the joy of the pure and essential Presence and do the best we can with the discordant externality,—or to say that the former alone is a Truth and the latter is only a falsehood or illusion created by a mysterious principle of Ignorance,—and then we have to find some way of escape



out of the falsehood of the manifest world into the truth of the hidden Reality. Or else we may say with the Buddhist that there is no need of explanation, since there is this one practical fact of the imperfection and impermanence of things and no Self, God or Brahman,—for that too is an illusion of our consciousness,—and all that is needed is to get rid of the persistent ideas and persistent energy which maintain the continuity of the impermanence. So we achieve self-extinction in Nirvana and extinguish the problem of things by our self-extinction. It is true that by excluding the discordant manifestation or insisting only on the pure and perfect Presence, we may achieve individually a deep and blissful sense of this silent Divinity and in the end an exclusive consciousness of it, and by immergence in it lose and so escape from the discordances of the manifestation. But our whole consciousness, our universal seeking for the Divine, for its full consciousness and delight and power of existence and therefore our whole being, knowledge-tendency and will are not satisfied. So long as the world is not divinely explained to us, God remains unexplained and imperfectly known, and so long as the world is not present to our consciousness and possessed by its powers in the sense of the divine being, we are not in possession of the whole Divinity.

On the other hand, if we try, admitting always the essential Presence, to justify also the divinity of the manifestation in which we live, we may say, secondly, that not only is the Spirit in things absolutely perfect and divine, but each thing also is relatively perfect and divine in itself, in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being and in its proper place in the complete manifestation. Each thing is divine in itself because each is a fact and idea of the divine being, knowledge and will fulfilling itself infallibly in accordance with the law of its own being; each is possessed of the knowledge, the force, the measure

and kind of delight of existence precisely proper to its own being, and each works in the gradations of experience decreed by this inherent will and law. It is thus perfect in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being ; for all are in harmony with that, spring out of it, adapt themselves to its purpose according to the infallibility of the divine will and knowledge at work within the creature. It is perfect and divine in relation to the whole, in its proper place in the whole, because all is a harmony of the divine manifestation ; to that it is necessary and in that it fulfils a part by which the perfection actual and progressive of the universal harmony, the adaptation of all in it to its whole purpose and its whole sense is helped and completed. If to us things appear undivine, if we hasten to condemn this or that phenomenon as inconsistent with the nature of the divine being, it is because we are ignorant of the sense and purpose of the Divine in the world in its entirety ; we see only parts and fragments and judge of each by itself as if it were the whole, judge also the external phenomena without knowing their secret sense and so vitiate our valuation of things by an initial and fundamental error.

Certainly, all this is true so far as it goes, but it also is as a solution incomplete by itself and cannot give us entire satisfaction, for it takes insufficient account of the human consciousness and the human view from which we have to start ; it cannot satisfy or convince but only contradicts by a cold intellectual conception our strong human sense of the reality of evil and imperfection and it gives no lead to our strong human aspiration towards the conquest of evil and imperfection. By itself, it amounts to little more than the facile dogma which tells us that all that is, is right, because all is perfectly decreed by the divine Wisdom. It gives us nothing better than a complacent intellectual and philosophic optimism and it gives us no key to the disconcerting facts of pain, suffering

and discord to which our human consciousness bears constant and troubling witness ; it merely suggests that in the divine reason of things there is a key to which we have no access. If the human consciousness were confined to the sense of this imperfection and the acceptance of it as a law of our life and nature,—a reasoned acceptance that answers to our human nature as the blind animal acceptance to the animal nature,—then we might say that it marked the limit of the divine self-expression in us, that our suffering worked for the general harmony and perfection of things and might console ourselves with this philosophic balm for our wounds, satisfied with moving among the pitfalls of life with as much rational prudence or philosophic sagacity and resignation as our imperfect nature permitted. Or taking refuge in the more consoling fervours of religion we might submit to all as the will of God in the hope or the faith of recompense in a Paradise beyond where we might put on a more pure and perfect nature. But an essential part of our human consciousness and its workings distinguishing it entirely from the animal is a dissatisfaction with our imperfection even as a law of our life upon earth and an aspiration towards the conquest of all imperfections,—not only in a heaven beyond where it would be automatically impossible to be imperfect, but here and now in a life where perfection has to be conquered by evolution and struggle. This dissatisfaction and aspiration are as much the law of our being as that against which they revolt ; they too are divine, a divine dissatisfaction, and a divine aspiration. They presuppose an inherent or they promise a coming power of better things which will justify the dissatisfaction and satisfy the aspiration.

We admit that all works perfectly towards a divine end by a divine wisdom and therefore each thing is in that sense perfect and divine in its place, but we say that what is, is not the whole of the divine purpose ; what is,

is only justifiable, finds its perfect sense and satisfaction only by what can and will be. We admit that there is a key in the divine reason which would justify things as they are by revealing their right sense and true secret which is other than their outward sense and phenomenal appearance as seen by us, but we say that to search for and find that key is the law of our being. The sign of the finding is not a philosophic recognition and a resigned or sage acceptance of things as they are because of some divine sense and purpose in them which is beyond us, but an elevation towards the divine knowledge and power which will transform the law and phenomena and external forms of our life nearer to a true image of that divine sense and purpose. We are prepared to endure suffering and all subjection to defect as the immediate will of God, a present law of imperfection laid on our members, but we say that it is also the will of God in us to conquer the suffering and to transform all imperfection into perfection by our rising into a higher law of the Divine. We recognise in our human consciousness an ideal truth of being, a divine nature, an incipient godhead and in relation to that higher truth our present state of imperfection is for us at least an undivine life and the conditions of the world from which we start are undivine conditions ; for they are by their very imperfection rather the disguise than the expression of the divine being and the divine nature. To strip off the disguise and to reveal or, in the Vedic phrase, to create the Divine in the manifest spirit, mind, life and body of our nature is to fulfil the highest law of our being. Our present nature is transitional ; our present status only our opportunity for another that shall be divine and perfect not only by the secret spirit within it but in the manifest form and body of our being.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE WORKS

This then is the Gita's doctrine of sacrifice. Its full sense depends on the idea of the Purushottama which as yet is not developed,—we find it set forth clearly only much later in the eighteen chapters,—and therefore we have had to anticipate the central teaching. At present the Teacher simply gives a hint, merely adumbrates this supreme presence of the Purushottama and his relation to the immobile Self in whom we have to find our poise of perfect peace and equality by attainment to the Brahmic condition. He speaks as yet not in set terms of the Purushottama, but of himself, — "I", Krishna, the Narayana, the God in man who is also the Lord in the universe incarnated in the figure of the divine charioteer of Kurukshetra. "In the Self, then in Me", is the formula he gives, implying that the transcendence of the individual personality by seeing it as a "becoming" in the impersonal self-existent Being is simply a means of arriving at that great impersonal Personality, which is silent, calm and uplifted above Nature in the impersonal Being, active in Nature in all these million becomings. Losing our lower individual personality in the Impersonal, we arrive finally at union with that supreme Personality which is not separate and individual, but assumes all individualities. Transcending the lower nature of the three gunas and seating the soul in the immobile Purusha

beyond the three gunas, we ascend finally into the higher nature of the infinite Godhead which is not bound by the three gunas even when it acts through Nature. Reaching the inner actionlessness of the silent Purusha, *naishkarmya*, and leaving Prakriti to do her works, we attain supremely beyond to the status of the divine Mastery which is able to do all works and yet be bound by none. The idea of the Purushottama, Krishna, is therefore the key. Without it the withdrawal from the lower nature to the Brahmic condition leads necessarily to inaction of the liberated man, his indifference to the works of the world ; with it the same withdrawal becomes a step by which the works of the world are taken up in the spirit, with the nature and in the freedom of the Divine. See the silent Brahman as the goal and the world with all its activities has to be forsaken ; see God, the Divine, the Purushottama as the goal and the world with all its activities is conquered and possessed in a divine transcendence of the world. It becomes instead of a prison-house the opulent kingdom, *rājyam samriddham*, which we have conquered by slaying the limitation of the ego and overcoming the bondage of our desires and our limiting individualistic possession and enjoyment. The liberated soul becomes *sacrať samrať*, self-ruler and emperor.

The works of sacrifice are thus a means of liberation and absolute spiritual perfection, *samsiddhi*. So Janaka and other great Karmayogins of the mighty ancient Yoga attained to perfection, by equal and desireless works done as a sacrifice without egoistic aim or attachment,—*karmanairva hi samsiddhim āsthitā janakādayah*. So too and with the same desirelessness, after liberation and perfection, works have to be continued in a large divine spirit, with the calm high nature of a spiritual royalty. "Thou shouldst do works regarding also the holding together of the peoples, *lokasangraham vṛṇīhi sampācyaṇ kartum arhasi*. Whatsoever the Best doeth, that the lower

kind of man puts into practice; the standard he creates, the people follows. O son of Pritha, I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the paths of action," *varta eva cha karmani*,—*eva* implying, I abide in it and do not leave it as the Sannyasin thinks himself bound to abandon works. "For if I did not abide sleeplessly in the paths of action, men follow in every way my path, these peoples would sink to destruction if I did not work and I should be the creator of confusion and slay these creatures. As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the peoples. He should not create a division of their understanding in the ignorant who are attached to their works; he should set them to all actions doing them himself with knowledge and in Yoga." There are few more important passages in the Gita than these seven striking couplets.

But let us clearly understand that they must not be interpreted, as the modern pragmatic tendency concerned much more with the present affairs of the world than with any high and far-off spiritual possibility seeks to interpret them, as no more than a philosophical and religious justification of social service, patriotic, cosmopolitan and humanitarian effort and attachment to the hundred eager social schemes and dreams which attract the modern intellect. It is not the rule of a large moral and intellectual altruism which is here announced, but that of a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in him and in whom he dwells. It is not an injunction to subordinate the individual to society and humanity or immolate egoism on the altar of the human collectivity, but to fulfil the individual in God and to sacrifice the ego on the one true altar of the all-embracing Divinity. The Gita moves on a plane of ideas and ex-

periences higher than those of the modern mind which is at the stage indeed of a struggle to shake off the coils of egoism, but is still mundane in its outlook and intellectual and moral rather than spiritual in its temperament. Patriotism, cosmopolitanism, service of society, collectivism, humanitarianism, the ideal or religion of humanity are admirable aids towards our escape from our primary condition of individual, family, social, national egoism into a secondary stage in which the individual realises, as far as it can be done on the intellectual, moral and emotional level,—on that level he cannot do it entirely in the right and perfect way, the way of the integral truth of his being,—the oneness of his existence with the existence of other beings. But the thought of the Gita reaches beyond to a tertiary condition of our developing self-consciousness towards which the secondary is only a partial stage of advance.

The Indian social tendency has been to subordinate the individual to the claims of society, but Indian religious thought and spiritual seeking have been always loftily individualistic in their aims. An Indian system of thought like the Gita's cannot possibly fail to put first the development of the individual, the highest need of the individual, his claim to discover and exercise his largest spiritual freedom, greatness, splendour, royalty,—his aim to develop into the illumined seer and king in the spiritual sense of seerdom and kingship, which was the first great charter of the ideal humanity promulgated by the ancient Vedic sages. To exceed himself was their goal for the individual, not by losing all his personal aims in the aims of an organised human society, but by enlarging, heightening, aggrandizing himself into the consciousness of the Godhead. The rule given here by the Gita is the rule for the master man, the superman, the divinised human being, the Best, not in the sense of any Nietzschean, any onesided and lopsided, any Olympian,



Apollinian or Dionysian, any angelic or demoniac supermanhood, but in that of the man whose whole personality has been offered up into the being, nature and consciousness of the one transcendent and universal Divinity.

To exalt oneself out of the lower imperfect Prakriti, *traigunyamayî Mâyâ*, into unity with the divine being, consciousness and nature,\* *madbhâvam âgatâh*, is the object of the Yoga. But when this object is fulfilled, when the man is in the Brahmic status and sees no longer with the false egoistic vision himself and the world, but sees all beings in the Self, in God and the Self in all beings, God in all beings, what shall be the action,—since action there still is,—which results from that seeing, and what shall be the cosmic or individual motive of all his works? It is the question of Arjuna,† but answered from a standpoint other than that from which Arjuna had put it. The motive cannot be personal desire on the intellectual, moral, emotional level, for that has been abandoned,—even the moral motive has been abandoned since the liberated man has passed beyond the lower distinction of sin and virtue, lives in a glorified purity beyond good and evil. It cannot be the spiritual call to his perfect self-development by means of disinterested works, for the call has been answered, the development is perfect and fulfilled. His motive of action can only be the holding together of the peoples, *chikîrshur lokasangraham*. This great march of the peoples towards a far-off divine ideal has to be held together, prevented from falling into the bewilderment, confusion and utter discord of the understanding which would lead to dissolution and destruction and to which the world moving forward in the night or dark twilight of ignorance would be too easily prone if it were not held together, conducted, kept to the great lines of its disci-

\* *Sâyuja, sâlokyâ and sâdharmya*. *Sâdharmya* is becoming of one law of being and action with the Divine.

† *Kim prabhâsheta kim âsita vrajeta kim.*

pline by the illumination, by the strength, by the rule and example, by the visible standard and the invisible influence of its Best. The best, the individuals who are in advance of the general line and above the general level of the collectivity, are the natural leaders of mankind, for it is they who can point to the race both the way they must follow and the standard or ideal they have to keep to or to attain. But the divinised man is the Best in no ordinary sense of the word and his influence, his example must have a power which that of no ordinarily superior man can exercise. What example then shall he give ? What rule or standard shall he uphold ?

In order to indicate more perfectly his meaning, the divine Teacher, the Avatar gives his own example, his own standard to Arjuna. "I abide in the path of action," he seems to say, "the path that all men follow ; thou too must abide in action. In the way I act, in that way thou too must act. I am above the necessity of works, for I have nothing to gain by them ; I am the Divine who possess all things and all beings in the world and myself beyond the world as well as in it and I do not depend upon anything or any one in all the three worlds for any object ; yet I act. This too must be thy manner and spirit of working. I, the Divine, am the rule and the standard ; it is I who make the path in which men tread ; I am the way and the goal. But I do all this largely, universally, visibly in part, but far more invisibly ; and men do not really know the way of my workings. Thou when thou knowest and seest, when thou hast become the divinised man, must be the individual power of God, the human yet divine example, even as I am in my avatars. Most men dwell in the ignorance, the God-seer dwells in the knowledge ; but let him not confuse the minds of men by a dangerous example, rejecting in his superiority the works of the world ; let him not cut short the thread of action before it is spun out, let him not perplex and

falsify the stages and gradations of the ways I have hewn. The whole range of human action has been decreed by me with a view to the progress of man from the lower to the higher nature, from the apparent undivine to the conscious Divine. The whole range of human works must be that in which the God-knower shall move. All individual, all social action, all the works of the intellect, the heart and the body are still his, not any longer for his own separate sake, but for the sake of God in the world, of God in all beings and that all those beings may move forward, as he has moved, by the path of works towards the discovery of the Divine in themselves. Outwardly his actions may not seem to differ essentially from theirs ; battle and rule as well as teaching and thought, all the various commerce of man with man may fall in his range ; but the spirit in which he does them, must be very different, and it is that spirit which by its influence shall be the great attraction drawing men upwards to his own level, the great lever lifting the mass of men higher in their ascent."

This giving of the example of God himself to the liberated man is profoundly significant ; for it reveals the whole basis of the Gita's philosophy of divine works. The liberated man is he who has exalted himself into the divine nature and according to that divine nature must be his actions. But what is the divine nature ? It is not that of the Akshara, the immobile, inactive, impersonal self ; for that by itself would lead the liberated man to actionless immobility. It is not that of the Kshara, the multitudinous, the personal, the Purusha self-subjected to Prakriti ; for that by itself would lead him back into subjection to his personality and to the lower nature and its qualities. It is the nature of the Purushottama who holds both these together and by his supreme divinity reconciles them in a divine reconciliation which is the highest secret of his being, *rahasyam hyetad uttamam*. He is

not the doer of works in the personal sense of our action involved in Prakriti, for God works through his power, conscious nature, effective force,—Shakti, Maya, Prakriti,—but yet above it, not involved in it, not subject to it, not unable to lift himself beyond the laws, workings, habits of action it creates, not affected or bound by them, not unable to distinguish himself, as we are unable, from the workings of life, mind and body. He is the doer of works who act not, *kartāram akartāram*. “Know me” says Krishna “for the doer of this (the fourfold law of human workings) who am yet the imperishable non-doer. Works fix not themselves on me (*na limpanti*), nor have I desire for the fruits of action.” But neither is he the inactive, impassive, unpuissant Witness and nothing else ; for it is he who works in the steps and measures of his power ; every movement of it, every particle of the world of beings it forms is instinct with his presence, full of his consciousness, impelled by his will, shaped by his knowledge.

He is, besides, the Supreme without qualities who is possessed of all qualities, *nirguṇo guṇi*.<sup>\*</sup> He is not bound by any mode of nature or action, nor consists, as our personality consists, of a sum of qualities, modes of nature, characteristic operations of the mental, moral, emotional, vital, physical being, but is the source of all modes and qualities, capable of developing any he wills in whatever way and to whatever degree he wills ; he is the infinite being of which they are ways of becoming, the immeasurable quantity and unbound ineffable of which they are measures, numbers and figures, which they seem to rhythmise and arithmise in the standards of the universe. Yet neither is he merely an impersonal indeterminate, nor a mere stuff of conscious existence for all determinations and personalisings to draw upon for their material, but a

---

<sup>\*</sup> *Upanishad* .

supreme Being, the one original conscious Existent, the perfect Personality capable of all relations even to the most human, concrete and intimate ; for he is friend, comrade, lover, playmate, guide, teacher, master, ministrant of knowledge or ministrant of joy, yet in all relations unbound, free and absolute. This too the divinised man becomes in the measure of his attainment, impersonal in his personality, unbound by quality or action even when maintaining the most personal and intimate relations with men, unbound by any *dharma* even when following in appearance this or that *dharma*. Neither the dynamism of the kinetic man, nor the actionless light of the ascetic or quietist, neither the vehement personality of the man of action nor the indifferent impersonality of the philosophic sage is the complete divine ideal. These are the two conflicting standards of the man of this world and the ascetic or the quietist philosopher, one immersed in the action of the Kshara, the other striving to dwell entirely in the peace of the Akshara ; but the complete divine ideal proceeds from the nature of the Purushottama which transcends this conflict and reconciles all divine possibilities.

The kinetic man is not satisfied with any ideal which does not depend upon the fulfilment of this cosmic nature, this play of the three qualities of that nature, this human activity of mind and heart and body. The highest fulfilment of that activity, he might say, is my idea of human perfection, of the divine possibility in man ; some ideal that satisfies the intellect, the heart, the moral being, some ideal of our human nature in its action can alone satisfy the human being ; he must have something that he can seek in the workings of his mind and life and body. For that is his nature, his *dharma*, and how can he be fulfilled in something outside his nature ? for to his nature each being is bound and within it he must seek for his perfection. According to our human nature must be our

human perfection ; and each man must strive for it according to the line of his personality, his *swadharma*, but in life, in action, not outside life and action. Yes, there is a truth in that, replies the Gita ; the fulfilment of God in man, the play of the Divine in life is part of the ideal perfection. But if you seek it only in the external, in life, in the principle of action, you will never find it ; for you will not only act according to your nature, but you will be eternally subject to its modes, its dualities of liking and dislike, pain and pleasure and especially to the rajasic mode with its principle of desire and its snare of wrath and grief and longing,—the restless, all-devouring principle of desire, the insatiable fire which besieges your worldly action, the eternal enemy of knowledge by which it is covered over here in your nature as is a fire by smoke or a mirror by dust and which you must slay in order to live in the calm, clear, luminous truth of the spirit. The senses, mind and intellect are the seat of this eternal cause of imperfection and yet it is within this sense, mind and intellect, this play of the lower nature that you would limit your search for perfection ! The effort is vain. The kinetic side of your nature must first seek to add to itself the quietistic ; you must uplift yourself beyond this lower nature to that which is above the three *gunas*, that which is founded in the highest principle, in the soul. Only when you have attained to peace of soul, can you become capable of a free and divine action.

The quietist, the ascetic on the other hand cannot see any possibility of perfection into which life and action enter. Are they not the very seat of bondage and imperfection ? Is not all action imperfect in its nature, like a fire that must produce smoke, is not the principle of action itself rajasic, the father of desire, a cause that must have its effect of obscuration of knowledge, its round of longing and success and failure, its oscillations of joy and grief, its duality of virtue and sin ? God may

be in the world, but he is not of the world ; he is a God of renunciation and not the Master or cause of our works; the master of our works is desire and the cause of works is ignorance. If the world, the Kshara is in a sense a manifestation or a *lila* of the Divine, it is an imperfect play with the ignorance of Nature, an obscuration rather than a manifestation. That is evident from our very first glance at the nature of the world and the fullest experience of the world teaches us always the same truth ; it is a wheel of the ignorance binding the soul to continual birth by the impulse of desire and action until at last that is exhausted or cast away. Not only desire, but action also must be flung away ; seated in the silent self the soul will then pass away into the motionless, actionless, imperturbable, absolute Brahman. To this objection of the impersonalising quietist the Gita is at more pains to answer than to that of the man of the world, the kinetic individual. For this quietism, having hold of a higher and more powerful truth which is yet not the whole or the highest truth, its promulgation as the universal, complete, highest ideal of human life is likely to be more confusing and disastrous to the advance of the human race towards its goal than the error of an exclusive kineticism. A strong onesided truth, when set forth as the whole truth, creates a strong light but also a strong confusion ; for the very strength of the element of truth increases the strength of the element of error. The error of the kinetic ideal can only prolong the ignorance and retard the human advance by setting it in search of perfection where perfection cannot be found ; but the error of the quietistic ideal contains in itself the very principle of world-destruction. Were I to act upon it, says Krishna, I should destroy the peoples and be the author of confusion; and though the error of an individual human being, even though a nearly divine man, cannot destroy the whole race, it may produce a widespread

confusion which may be in its nature destructive of the principle of human life and disturbing to the settled line of its advance.

Therefore the quietistic tendency in man must be got to recognise its own incompleteness and admit on an equality with itself the truth which lies behind the kinetic tendency,—the fulfilment of God in man and the presence of the Divine in all the action of the human race. God is there not only in the silence, but in the action ; the quietism of the impassive soul unaffected by Nature and the kinetism of the soul giving itself to nature so that the great world-sacrifice, the Purusha-Yajna, may be effected, are not a reality and a falsehood in perpetual struggle nor yet two hostile realities, one superior, the other inferior, each fatal to the other ; they are the double term of the divine manifestation. The Akshara is not the whole key of their fulfilment, not the highest secret ; their fulfilment, their reconciliation is in the Purushottama represented here by Krishna, at once supreme Being, Lord of the worlds and Avatar. The divinised man entering into his divine nature will act even as he acts ; he will not give himself up to inaction. The Divine is at work in man in the ignorance and at work in man in the knowledge. To know Him is our soul's highest welfare and the condition of its perfection, but to know and realise Him as a transcendent peace and silence is not all ; the secret that has to be learned is at once the secret of the eternal and unborn Divine and the secret of the divine birth and works, *janma karma cha me diyam*. The action which proceeds from that knowledge, will be free from all bondage ; "he who so knoweth me" says the Teacher, "is not bound by works." If the escape from the obligation of works and desire and from the wheel of rebirth is the aim and the ideal, then this knowledge is the true, the broad way of escape ; for, says the Gita, "he who knows in its right principles my divine birth and



works, comes when he leaves his body, not to rebirth, but to Me, O Arjuna." Through the knowledge and possession of the divine birth he comes to the unborn and imperishable Divine who is the Self of all beings, *aṣṭaśayaya ātmā* ; through the knowledge and possession of divine works, he comes to the Master of works, the Lord of all beings, *bhūtaṇāṃ īśvara*. In that unborn being he lives and he works in that universal Mastery.

---

# The Synthesis of Yoga

---

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### VIJÑANA OR GNOSIS

For the perfect self-transcendence we have to draw up, the Upanishad has said, our mental conscious-being into the knowledge-self and to dwell in the divine knowledge by change into the knowledge-soul, the *vijñāna-maya* Purusha. Seated on that level of the Vedic hill of ascent we shall be in quite a different plane of being from this material, this vital, this mental soul and nature of things which is our present view and experience of our soul-life and of the world. We shall be born into a new soul-status and put on a new nature ; for according to the status of the soul is the status of the Prakriti. As the conscious-soul rises to a higher level of being, the nature also is elevated into a superior working, a wider consciousness, a vaster force, an intenser and purer joy of existence ; but the transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and the decisive transition in the Vedic Yoga. It is the shaking off of the last hold of the cosmic ignorance on our nature and its firm foundation in the infinite Truth of things. So long as we are in the triple formula of mind, life and body, our nature works upon the basis of the ignorance even when the soul reflects the knowledge ; for though the soul

reflects the knowledge in consciousness, it is unable to mobilise it rightly in force of action. The truth in its action may greatly increase, but it is pursued by a limitation, condemned to a divisibility which prevents it from working integrally in the power and knowledge of the infinite ; its power may be immense compared with ordinary powers, but it is still subject to incapacity and there is no perfect correspondence between the force of the effective will and the light of the idea which inspires it ; the light of the infinite Presence may be there in status, but the dynamis of the operations of our nature still belongs to the lower Prakriti and its triple modes of working. But the *vijnāna* or gnosis is the very working of the infinite and divine nature ; it is the divine knowledge one with the divine will in the delight of spontaneous and luminous self-fulfilment. By the gnosis, then, we change our human into a divine nature.

What then is this gnosis and how can we describe it ? There are in the ordinary philosophical notions of the term *vijnāna* two opposite errors which disfigure two opposite sides of the truth with regard to the gnosis. In one *vijnāna* is used as synonymous with the *buddhi* and the Indian term *buddhi* as synonymous with the reason or discerning intellect. The classifications which accept this significance, pass at once from a plane of pure intellect to a plane of pure spirit ; they recognise no intermediate power, no diviner action of knowledge than the pure reason. In the other error it is supposed that *vijnāna* is the consciousness which gives us the knowledge of the Infinite free from all ideation or with ideation packed into one essence of thought, lost in the single and invariable idea of the One, the *chaitanyaghana* of the Upanishad. But the gnosis, the *vijnāna* is not only this concentrated consciousness of the infinite Being, it is also the infinite knowledge of the play of the Infinite ; it contains all ideation in itself though it is not limited by

ideation. This ideation, however, is not in its character intellectual ideation, not what we call the reason ; for that is mental in its methods, mental in its basis, mental in its acquisitions, but the ideation of the gnosis is supramental in its methods, its basis, its yield of thought-light. There is a relation, even a sort of broken identity between the two forms of thought, one indeed proceeds from the other ; but they act on different planes and reverse each other's process. Even the purest reason, the most luminous rational intellectuality is not the gnosis.

Reason or intellect is only the lower *buddhi*, dependent for its action on the percepts of the sense-mind and the concepts of the mental intelligence. There is, indeed, a higher form of the *buddhi*, often called the intuitive mind or intuitive reason, which by its intuitions, inspirations, swift revelatory vision, luminous insight and discrimination seems to do the work of the reason with a higher power, a swifter action, a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the sense-mind or its percepts and proceeds not by intelligent, but by visional concepts. This real intuition must be distinguished from another power of the reason which is sometimes confused with it, its power of reaching its conclusion by a bound and not by the ordinary steps of the logical mind. The logical reason proceeds step by step trying the sureness of each step like a man walking over unsure ground and testing by the touch of his foot each pace of soil that he perceives with his eye. This other process of the reason is a process of rapid insight or swift discernment which proceeds by a stride or leap, like a man leaping from one sure spot to another point of sure footing ; he sees the space he covers in one compact and flashing view, but he does not distinguish or measure either by eye or touch its successions, features and circumstances.

This process has something of the sense of power of the intuition, something of its velocity, some appearance

of its light and certainty, and we are apt to mistake it for the intuition. It is often thought that the intuition is nothing more than this rapid process in which the whole action of the logical mind is swiftly done or done half-consciously or subconsciously, but not at first deliberately worked out in its reasoned method. In its nature, however, this proceeding is quite different from the intuition ; the power of its leap may end in a stumble, its swiftness may betray, its certainty is often an error. The validity of its conclusion must always depend on a subsequent verification by the evidence of the sense-perceptions or a rational linking of intelligent conceptions. But the intuition carries in itself its own guarantee of truth ; it is sure and infallible within its limits, so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or intellectual ideation, ; it may be verified by the reason or the sense-perception afterwards, but its truth does not depend on that verification. If the reason depending on its inferences contradicts it, it will be found in the end on ampler knowledge that the intuitional conclusion was correct and the rational and inferential conclusion mistaken. For the real intuition proceeds from the self-existent truth of things and by that self-existent truth and not by any indirect, derivatory or dependent method of arriving at knowledge.

But even the intuitive reason is not the gnosis ; it is only the light of the gnosis finding its way by flashes of illumination into the mentality. Its inspirations, revelations, intuitions, self-luminous discernings are messages from a higher knowledge-plane that make their way into our lower level of consciousness. This character of the intuitive mind sets a great difference between its action and the action of the self-contained gnosis. In the first place it acts by separate and limited illuminations and its truth is restricted to the often narrow reach or the one brief spot of knowledge lit up by that one lightning-flash.

We see the action of the instinct in animals,—an automatic intuition in that sense-mind which is all that the animal has to rely on, since it does not possess the human light of the reason,—and we can observe that the marvellous truth of this instinct which seems so much surer than the reason, is limited to some particular and restricted utility it is intended to serve. When the mind of the animal tries to act beyond that restricted limit, it blunders in a much blinder way than the reason of man and has to learn with difficulty by a succession of sense-experiences. The mental intuition of the human being is a visional, not a sense intuition ; it illumines the intelligence and not the sense-mind ; it is self-conscious and luminous, not a half subconscious blind light ; it is self-acting, but not mechanically automatic. But still it is restricted like the instinct, restricted to a particular purpose of will or knowledge, as is the instinct to a particular purpose of life utility. When the intelligence tries to make use of it, to apply it, to add to it, it builds round it in its own characteristic fashion a mass of mixed truth and error ; it may even, by foisting an element of sense-error and conceptual error into the substance of the intuition or coating it up in error, not merely deflect but deform its truth and convert it into a falsehood. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited, though an intense light ; at the worst, by our misuse of it, it may lead us into perplexities and confusions which the less ambitious intellectual reason avoids by remaining satisfied with its own safe and plodding method,—safe for the inferior purposes of the reason, though never a guide to the inner truth of things.

It is possible to cultivate and extend the use of the intuitive mind in proportion as we rely less predominantly upon the intellectual reason. We may train our mentality not, as it does now, to seize upon every separate flash of intuitive illumination and then precipitate our thought at

once into a crystallising intellectual action around it, but to think in a stream of successive and connected intuitions. We shall be successful in proportion as we purify the intelligence itself and reduce in it the element of material thought enslaved to the external appearances of things, of vital thought enslaved to the wishes, desires, impulses of the being and of intellectual thought enslaved to our preferred, already settled or congenial ideas, conceptions, opinions, operations of intelligence and replace them by an intuitive sense or insight into appearances, an intuitive will, an intuitive ideation. This is difficult enough for our consciousness which is naturally bound by the triple cord of mentality, vitality, corporeality,—the upper, middle and lower cord in the Vedic parable of the soul's bondage to the mixed truth and falsehood of appearances by which Çunahçepa was bound to the post of sacrifice.

But even if it were perfectly accomplished, still the intuitive mentality would not be the gnosîs ; it would only be its reflection. The difference, difficult enough to define except by symbols, may be expressed by taking the Vedic image in which the Sun represents the gnosîs and the sky, mid-air and earth the mentality, vitality, corporeality of man. Living on the earth, climbing into the mid-air or even winging in the sky, the mental being, the *manomaya* Purusha, would still live in the rays of the sun and not in its bodily light ; and he would see things as reflected in his organ of vision, deformed by its faults or limited in their truth by its restrictions. But the *vijnânâmaya* Purusha lives in the Sun itself, in the very body and blaze of the true light ;\* he would know it self-luminously as his own being and he would see besides all that dwells in the rays of the sun, see the whole truth of the lower triplicity and each thing that is in it. He would see it not by reflection in a mental organ of vision, but with the

---

\* So the Sun is called in the Vêda, *ritam jyotiî*.

Sun of gnosis itself as his eye,—the Sun, says the Veda, is the eye of the gods. The mental being, even in the intuitive mind, can perceive the truth only by reflection and subject to the restrictions and inferior capacity of the mental vision; the *vijñānamaya* would see it by the gnosis itself, from the very centre and outwelling fount of the truth, in its very form and by its own spontaneous and self-illuminating process. For the *vijñāna* is the direct and divine as opposed to the indirect and human knowledge.

The nature of the gnosis can only be indicated intellectually by contrasting it with the nature of the intellectual mentality, and even then in phrases which do not illuminate unless aided by some amount of actual experience,—for what language forged by the reason can really express the suprarational? The mental reason proceeds from ignorance to truth, the gnosis has in itself the direct and immediate vision of the truth. The reason starts with appearances and labours, never or seldom losing at least a partial dependence on appearances, to arrive at the truth behind them; the gnosis starts from the truth and shows the appearances in the light of the truth. The reason proceeds by inference, it concludes; the gnosis proceeds by vision,—it sees and knows. As the physical eye sees and grasps the appearance of objects, so the gnosis sees and grasps the truth of things; and where the physical sense gets into relation with objects by contact, the gnosis gets into identity with things by oneness. Thus it is able to know all things as a man knows his own existence, directly. To the reason only what the senses give is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*, the rest of truth is arrived at indirectly; to the gnosis all its truth is direct knowledge, *pratyaksha*. Therefore the truth gained by the intellect is an acquisition over which there hangs always a certain shadow of doubt, an incompleteness, a surrounding penumbra of night and ignorance or half-



knowledge, a possibility of alteration or annulation by farther knowledge. The truth of the gnosis is free from doubt, self-evident, self-existent.

The reason has as its first instrument observation general, analytical, synthetic ; it aids itself by comparison, contrast and analogy ; it proceeds from experience to indirect knowledge by logical processes of inference, by deduction, by induction ; it rests upon memory, reaches out beyond itself by imagination, secures itself by judgment ; all is a process of groping and seeking. The gnosis does not seek, it possesses ; or if it has to enlighten, it does not even then seek, but reveals. In a consciousness rising from intelligence towards gnosis, imagination would be progressively replaced by truth-inspiration, judgment by a self-luminous discerning, the logical process from reasoning to conclusion by a swift intuitive proceeding which sees the conclusion or fact at once and all the evidence by which we arrive at it not as its evidence, but as its circumstances and relations seen in one comprehensive view ; observation would be replaced by vision not merely of the thing, but its truth, and our uncertain memory by luminous possession of knowledge not as a store of acquisition, but as a thing always contained in one's own consciousness.

For while the reason proceeds from moment to moment of time losing and acquiring and losing again and acquiring again, the gnosis possesses time in one view and links past, present and future in their indivisible connections. The gnosis starts from the totality and sees parts, groups and details only in relation to the totality, while the mental reason cannot really see the totality at all and does not know fully any whole except by starting from an analysis and synthesis of its parts, masses and details ; otherwise its whole-view is always a vague or imperfect or a confused view. The reason deals with processes and properties and tries in vain to form by them

an idea of the thing in itself ; the gnosis sees the thing in itself, its original and eternal nature and its processes and properties only as a self-expression of its nature. The reason dwells in the diversity and deals with thing separately and treats each as a separate existence, as it deals with sections of Time and divisions of Space ; it sees unity only in a sum or by elimination of diversity or as a general conception : the gnosis dwells in the unity and starts from the unity and it sees diversities only of a unity, it does not recognise any real division nor treat things separately as if they were independent of their real and original unity. The reason deals with the finite and is helpless before the infinite which it can conceive of readily only as an indefinite extension in which the finite acts ; it can with difficulty conceive and cannot at all grasp the infinite in itself ; but the gnosis lives in the infinite, starts always from the infinite and knows finite things only in their relation to the infinite and in the sense of the infinite.

If we would describe the gnosis, not thus imperfectly as it is in contrast with the reason, but as it is in itself, we can hardly speak of it except in figures and symbols, We must remember that the *vijnānamaya* level is not the supreme plane of our consciousness, but a middle or link plane interposed between the triune glory of the utter Spirit, the infinite existence, consciousness and bliss, and our lower triple being. Sachchidananda gathers up the light of his existence into the gnosis and pours it out as the divine knowledge, will and joy of being upon the soul, as if infinite light were gathered up into the compact orb of the sun and poured upon all that depends upon the sun. The gnosis is not only light but force, it is creative knowledge, self-effective truth of the divine Idea. This idea is not creative imagination, not something that creates in a void, but truth-light full of truth-force ; it brings out what is latent in its being, it does not create

a fiction that never was in being. As is the Idea, so is its ideation ; the ideation of the gnosis is radiating light-stuff of the consciousness of being, each ray a truth ; its will is a conscious force throwing the consciousness and substance of being into infallible forms which embody the idea and work it out spontaneously and rightly according to its nature. Because of this creative force of the divine Idea, the Sun, the lord and symbol of the gnosis, is described in the Veda as the Light which is the father of all things, Surya Savitri, the Wisdom-Luminous, who is the bringer-out into being. Its creation is inspired by the Ananda, the divine delight,—it is full of the joy of its own truth and power in the creating ; therefore the world of the gnosis is the *ritam* and the *bhadrām*, the true and the happy creation, since all in it shares in its perfect joy. Divine knowledge, divine will and divine bliss received, concentrated, thrown out in action of knowledge, will and delight is the nature or Prakriti of the soul in *vijnāna*.

Thus there are three powers of the *vijnāna*. It knows and receives the infinite being, consciousness and bliss into itself and in its highest height it is the knowledge of infinite Sachchidananda ; it concentrates all into the dense luminous consciousness, *chaitanyaghaṇa* or *chidghaṇa*, the seed-state of the divine consciousness in which all the principles of the divine being, all the truths of the divine conscious-idea and nature are contained ; it brings or looses it out by effective ideation of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight into a universal harmony or rhythm of being. The mental Purusha rising into the *vijnānamaya* will therefore ascend into these three powers, turning by conversion into the powers of the gnosis its mental ideation into that of the divine knowledge, will-force and delight, turning its conscious stuff of mental nature and being into the *chidghaṇa* or dense self-luminous consciousness from which the ideation proceeds,

turning its conscious self into a *vijnâna* self or Truth-self of infinite Sachchidananda ; from that the whole *vijnâna-maya* nature and activity proceed. These three movements are described in the Isha Upanishad as *vyûha*, the marshalling of the rays of the Sun of gnosis in the order of the Truth-consciousness, *samûha*, the gathering together of the rays into the body of the Sun of gnosis, and the vision of that Sun's fairest form of all in which the soul possesses its infinite oneness with the supreme Purusha,\* crying *So 'ham*. God above and the soul dwelling in and one with the Divine,—the infinite power and truth of the Divine concentrated in the luminous nature of the soul's being,—the radiating activity of the divine knowledge, will and joy perfect in the natural action of its Prakriti,—this is the experience of the soul in gnosis.

---

\* *Sûrya vacmîn vyûha samûha tejo yat t kalyânatamam rūpam tat te paçyami so 'sân asau purushah so 'ham asmi*. The Veda describes the *vijnâna* plane as *ritam satyam brihat*, the Right, Truth, Vast, the same triple idea differently expressed. *Ritam* is the action of the divine knowledge, will and joy in the order of the truth, *satyam* the truth of being which so acts, *brihat* the infinity of Sachchidananda out of which they proceed and in which they are founded.

# The Eternal Wisdom

---

## THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

### SIMPLICITY : MODESTY

- 1 Let not therefore the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.
- 2 A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour
- 3 shall uphold the humble in spirit.—Pride goeth before destruction, but before honour is humility.—
- 4 Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
- 5 If you give to a man all riches and all might and he looks upon himself with the same humility as before, then that man far surpasses other human beings.
- 6 All the splendour of outward greatness has no lustre for men who are in search of the Spirit. The greatness of men of the Spirit is obnoxious to the rich, the kings, the conquerors and all the men of
- 7 the flesh.—Such are they who have not acquired self-knowledge, men who vaunt their science, are proud of their wisdom, vain of their riches.

---

1) Jeremiah IX. 23.—2) Proverbs XXIX. 23.—3) id XVI. 18; XVII. 12.—4) Luke XIV. 11.—5) Meng-tse.—6) Pascal : *Pensées*.—7) Ramakrishna.

- 8 Man is good when he raises very high his divine and spiritual "I"; but frightful when he wishes to exalt above men his fleshly "I" vain, ambitious and exclusive.
- 9 All other vanities can be gradually extinguished, but the vanity of the saint in his saintliness is difficult indeed to banish.—This is a great fault in men, to love to be the models of others.—To be a man of worth and not to try to look like one is the true way to glory.
- 12 The supreme virtue does not consider itself a virtue and that is why it is virtue : the inferior positively believes itself to be virtue and that is why it is not virtue.—Men of superior virtue practise it without thinking of it ; those of inferior virtue go about it with intention.—The man of superior virtue is well pleased in the humblest situation. His heart loves to be deep as the abyss.
- 15 The saint does good and makes not much of it. He accomplishes great things and is not attached to them. He does not wish to let his wisdom appear.—
- 16 The saint does not seek to do great things; that is why he is able to accomplish them.
- 17 When one has done great things and made a reputation, one should withdraw out of view.—The man who has done good does not cry it through the world.—So long as a man has a little knowledge, he goes everywhere reading and preaching; but when the perfect knowledge has been attained, one ceases
- 20 from vain ostentation.—Only the man who knows that God lives in his soul, can be humble ; such a one is absolutely indifferent to what men say of him.

---

8) Tolstoi.—9) Ramakrishna.—10) Meng-tse. 11) Socrates.—  
 12) Lao Tse : Tao-te-King.—13) id.—14) id.—15) id.—16) id.—  
 17) id.—18) Marcus Aurelius.—19) Ramakrishna.—20) Tolstoi.

- 21 Take heed that ye do not alms before men, to be  
 22 seen of them.—Make no parade of your wisdom ; it  
 is a vanity which costs dear to many. Let wisdom  
 correct your vices, but not attack those of others.
- 23 Mind not high things, but condescend to men of  
 24 low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit.—I say  
 to every man that is among you, not to think of him-  
 self more highly than he ought to think, but to think  
 soberly.
- 25 Be pure, be simple and hold always a just mean.—  
 26 Unite always to a great exactitude uprightness and  
 27 simplicity of heart. — Be ye wise as serpents and  
 simple as doves.
- 28 Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom ; be  
 29 humbler still if thou hast attained to it—Seest thou  
 a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope  
 of a fool than of him.
- 30 Be not proud in thy riches, nor in thy strength,  
 31 nor in thy wisdom.—If thou givest thyself up to the  
 least pride, thou art no longer master of thyself, thou  
 lovest thy understanding as if thou wert drunk with  
 32 wine.—So long as thou livest in the bewilderment  
 and seduction of pride, thou shalt abide far from the  
 truth.
- 33 Thou hast cleansed thy heart of soil and bled it  
 dry of impure desires. But, O glorious combatant,  
 thy task is not yet done. Build high the wall which  
 shall protect thy mind from pride and satisfaction at  
 the thought of the great work accomplished.
- 34 Oh, if the heart could become a cradle and God  
 once more a child upon the earth !

---

21) Matthew VI. 1.—22) Seneca.—23) Romans XII. 16.—  
 24) id. XII. 3.—25) Chu-King.— 26) id.— 27) Matthew X. 16.—  
 28) Book of Golden Precepts.— 29) Proverbs XXVI. 12.—  
 30) Phocylides.— 31) Farid-ud-din-attar.— 32) id.— 33) Book of  
 Golden Precepts.— 34) Angelus Silesius.

# **The Psychology of Social Development**

---

## **XIV**

Religion is the seeking after the spiritual, the supra-rational and therefore in this sphere the reason may well be an insufficient help and even feel itself, not only at the end but from the beginning, out of its province and condemned to tread either diffidently or else with a stumbling presumptuousness in the realm of a power and a light higher than its own. But in the other spheres of human consciousness and human activity it may be thought that it has the right to the sovereign place, since these move on the lower plane of the rational and the finite or even belong to that border-land where the rational and the infrarational meet and the impulses and the instincts of man stand in need above all of the light and the control of the reason. In its own sphere of finite knowledge, science, philosophy, the useful arts its right, one would think, must be indisputable. But this does not turn out in the end to be true. Its province may be larger, its powers more ample, its action more justly self-confident, but in the end everywhere it finds itself standing between the two other powers of our being and fulfilling in greater or less degree the same function of an intermediary. On one side it is an enlightener—not always



the chief enlightener—and the corrector of our life-impulses and first mental seekings, on the other it is only one minister of the veiled Spirit and a preparer of the paths for the coming of its rule.

This is especially evident in the two realms which in the ordinary scale of our powers stand nearest to and on either side of the reason itself, the aesthetic and the ethical being, the search for Beauty and the search for Good. Man's seeking after beauty reaches its most intense and satisfying expression in the great creative arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, but in its full extension there is no activity of his nature or his life from which it need or ought to be excluded,—provided we understand beauty both in its widest and its truest sense. A complete and universal appreciation of beauty and the making entirely beautiful our whole life and being must surely be a necessary character of the perfect individual and the perfect society. But in its origin this seeking for beauty is not rational ; it springs from the roots of our life, it is an instinct and an impulse, an instinct of aesthetic satisfaction and an impulse of aesthetic creation and enjoyment. Starting from the infrarational parts of our being, this instinct and impulse begin with much imperfection and impurity, with great crudities both in creation and in appreciation. It is here that the reason comes in to distinguish, to enlighten, to correct, to point out the deficiencies and the crudities, to lay down laws of aesthetics and to purify our appreciation and our creation by improved taste and right knowledge. While we are thus striving to learn and correct ourselves, it may seem to be the true lawgiver both for the artist and the admirer and though not the creator of our aesthetic instinct and impulse, yet the creator in us of an aesthetic conscience and its vigilant judge and guide. That which was an obscure and erratic activity, it makes self-conscious and rationally discriminative in its work and enjoyment.

But again this is entirely true only in restricted bounds and on a middle plane of our aesthetic seeking and activity. Where the greatest and most powerful creation of beauty is accomplished and its appreciation and enjoyment rise to the highest pitch, the rational is always surpassed and left behind. The creation of beauty in poetry and art does not fall within the sovereignty or even within the sphere of the reason. The intellect is not the poet, the artist, the creator within us; creation comes by a suprarational influx of light and power which must work always, if it is to do its best, by vision and inspiration. It may use the intellect for certain of its operations, but in proportion as it subjects itself to the intellect, it loses in power and force of vision and diminishes the splendour and truth of the beauty it creates. The intellect may take hold of the influx, moderate and repress the divine enthusiasm of creation and force it to obey the prudence of its dictates, but in doing so it brings down the work to its own inferior level, and the lowering is in proportion to the intellectual interference. For by itself the intelligence can only achieve talent, though it may be a high and even, if sufficiently helped from above, a surpassing talent. Genius, the true creator, is always suprarational in its nature and its instrumentation even when it seems to be doing the work of the reason, and it is most itself, most exalted in its work, most sustained in the power, depth, height and beauty of its achievement when it is least touched by, least mixed with any control of the mere intellectuality and least often drops from its heights of vision and inspiration into reliance upon the always mechanical process of intellectual construction. Art-creation which accepts the canons of the reason and works within the limits laid down by it, may be great, beautiful and powerful; for genius can preserve its power even when it labours in shackles and refuses to put forth all its resources; but when it proceeds by means of the intellect,

it constructs, but does not create. It may construct well and with a good and faultless workmanship, but its success is formal and not of the spirit, a success of technique and not the embodiment of the imperishable truth of beauty seized in its inner reality.

There have been periods of artistic creation, ages of reason, in which the rational and intellectual tendency has prevailed in poetry and art; there have even been nations which in their great formative periods of art and literature, have set up reason and a meticulous taste as the sovereign powers of their aesthetic activity. At their best they have done work of a certain greatness, but always of an intellectual greatness and perfection of technique rather than achievements of an inspired and revealing beauty; indeed their very aim has been not the discovery of the deeper truth of beauty, but truth of ideas and truth of reason, a critical rather than a true creative aim. Their object has been an intellectual criticism of life and nature rather than a revelation of God and man and life and nature in the forms of artistic beauty. But great art is not satisfied with representing the intellectual truth of things, which is always their superficial or exterior truth; it seeks for their deeper and original truth which escapes the eye of the mere sense or the mere reason, the soul in them, the unseen reality which is not that of their form and process but of their spirit. This it seizes and expresses by form and idea, but a significant form, which is not merely a faithful and just or a harmonious reproduction, and a revelatory idea, not the idea which is merely correct, elegantly right or fully satisfying to the reason and taste. Always the truth it seeks is first and foremost the truth of beauty,—not, again, the formal beauty alone or the beauty of proportion and right process which is what the sense and the reason seek, but the soul of beauty which is hidden from the ordinary eye and the ordinary mind and revealed in its fullness only to the unscaled

vision of the poet and artist in man who can seize the secret significances of the universal poet and artist, the divine creator who dwells as their soul and spirit in the forms he has created,

The art-creation which lays a supreme stress on reason and taste and on perfection and purity of a technique constructed in obedience to the canons of reason and taste, claims for itself the name of classical art ; but the claim is of doubtful validity. The spirit of the real, the great classical art and poetry is to bring out what is universal and subordinate individual expression to universal truth and beauty, just as that of romantic art and poetry is to bring out what is striking and individual so powerfully as to throw into the background of its creation the universal, on which yet all true art romantic or classical builds and fills in its forms. In truth, all great art has carried in it both a classical and a romantic as well as a realistic element,—understanding realism in the sense of the prominent bringing out of the external truth of things, not the perverse romanticism which brings into exaggerated prominence the ugly, common or morbid and puts that forward as the whole truth of life. The type of art to which a great creative work belongs is determined by the prominence it gives to one element and the subduing of the others into subordination to its reigning spirit. But classical art also works by a large vision and inspiration, not by the process of the intellect. The lower kind of classical art and literature,—if classical it be and not rather, as it often is, pseudo-classical, intellectually imitative of the external form and process of the classical,—may achieve work of considerable, though a much lesser power, but of the essentially inferior scope and nature to which it is condemned by its principle of intellectual construction. Almost always it speedily degenerates into the formal and academical, empty of real beauty, void of life and power, imprisoned in slavery to

form and imagining that when a certain form has been followed, certain canons of construction satisfied, certain rhetorical rules obeyed, all has been achieved. It ceases to be art and becomes a cold and mechanical workmanship.

This predominance given to reason and taste in the creation and appreciation of beauty arises from a temper of mind which is critical rather than creative; and in regard to creation it makes a capital error. All artistic work in order to be perfect must indeed have in the very act of creation the guidance of an inner power of discrimination constantly selecting and rejecting in accordance with a principle of truth and beauty which remains always faithful to a harmony, a proportion, an intimate relation of the form to the idea and the idea to the spirit, nature and inner body of the thing of beauty which has been revealed to the soul and the mind, its *svatūṣṭa* and *svabhāva*; it rejects all that is foreign, superfluous, otiose, a mere diversion distractive and deformative, excessive or defective, while it selects and finds sovereignly all that can bring out the full truth, the utter beauty, the inmost power. But this discrimination is not that of the critical intellect, nor is the harmony, proportion, relation it observes that which can be fixed by any set law of the critical reason; it exists in the very nature and truth of the thing itself, the creation itself, in its secret inner law of beauty and harmony which can be seized by vision, not by intellectual analysis. And the discrimination which works in the creator, is therefore not an intellectual self-criticism or an obedience to rules imposed on him from outside by any intellectual canons, but itself creative, intuitive, a part of the vision, involved in and inseparable from the act of creation. It comes as part of that influx of power and light from above which by its divine enthusiasm lifts the faculties into their intense suprarational working. When it fails, when it is betrayed by the lower executive instruments rational or infrarational,—and this

happens when these cease to be passive and insist on obtruding their own demands or vagaries,—the work is flawed and a subsequent act of self-criticism becomes necessary. But in correcting his work the artist who attempts to do it by rule and intellectual process, uses a false or at any rate an inferior method and cannot do his best. He has rather to call to his aid the intuitive critical vision and embody it in a fresh act of inspired creation or re-creation after bringing himself back by its means into harmony with the light and law of his original creative initiation. The critical intellect has no part in the means of the inspired creator of beauty.

In the appreciation of beauty it has a part, but it is not even there the supreme judge or lawgiver. The business of the intellect is to analyse the elements, parts, external processes, apparent principles of that which it studies and explain their relations and workings ; in doing this it instructs and enlightens the lower mentality which has, if left to itself, the habit of doing things or seeing what is done and taking all for granted without proper observation and fruitful understanding. But with the highest and deepest truth of beauty as with truth of religion, the intellectual reason cannot seize its inner sense and reality, not even the inner truth of its apparent principles and processes, unless it is aided by a higher insight not its own. As it cannot give a method, process or rule by which beauty can or ought to be created, so also it cannot give to the appreciation of beauty that deeper insight which it needs ; it can only help to remove the dullness and vagueness of the habitual perceptions and conceptions of the lower mind which prevent it from seeing beauty or which give it false and crude aesthetic habits ; it does this by giving to the mind an external idea and rule of the elements of the thing it has to perceive and appreciate. What is farther needed is the awakening of a certain vision, an insight and an intuitive response in the soul. Reason

which studies always from outside, cannot give this inner and more intimate contact ; it has to aid itself by a more direct insight springing from the soul itself and to call at every step on the intuitive mind to fill up the gap of its own deficiencies.

We see this in the history of the development of literary and artistic criticism. In its earliest stages the appreciation of beauty is instinctive, natural, inborn, a response of the aesthetic sensitiveness of the soul which does not attempt to give any account of itself. When the rational intelligence applies itself to this task, it is not satisfied with recording faithfully the nature of the response and the thing it has felt, but it attempts to analyse, to lay down what is necessary in order to create a just aesthetic gratification, it prepares a grammar of technique, an artistic law and canon of construction, a sort of mechanical rule of process for the creation of beauty, a fixed code or *Shastra*. This brings in the long reign of academic criticism superficial, technical, artificial, governed by the false idea that technique, of which alone critical reason can give an entirely adequate account, is the most important part of creation and that to every art there can correspond an exhaustive science which will tell us how the thing is done and give us the whole secret and process of its doing. A time comes when the creator of beauty revolts and declares the charter of his own freedom, generally in the shape of a new law or principle of creation, and this freedom once vindicated begins to widen itself and to carry with it the critical reason out of all its familiar bounds. A more developed appreciation emerges which begins to seek for new principles of criticism, to search for the soul of the work itself and explain the form in relation to the soul or to study the creator himself or the spirit, nature and ideas of the age he lived in, so to arrive at a right understanding of his work. The intellect has begun to see that its highest business is not to lay down laws for

the creator of beauty, but to help us to understand his work and himself, not only its form and elements but the mind from which it sprang and the impressions its effects create in the mind that receives. Here criticism is on its right road, but on a road to a consummation in which the rational understanding is overpassed.

For the conscious appreciation of beauty reaches its height of enlightenment and enjoyment not by analysis of the beauty enjoyed or even by a right and intelligent understanding of it,—these are only a preliminary clarifying of our first unenlightened sense of the beautiful,—but by an exaltation of the soul in which it opens itself entirely to the light and power and joy of the creation, the soul of beauty in us identifying itself with the soul of beauty in the thing created and feeling in appreciation the same divine intoxication and uplifting which the artist felt in creation. Criticism must reach its highest point where it becomes the record, account, right description of this response ; it must become itself inspired, intuitive, revealing. In other words the action of the intuitive mind must complete the action of the rational intelligence and it may even wholly replace it and do more powerfully the peculiar and proper work of the intellect itself ; it may explain more intimately to us the secret of the form, the process, the secret of the defects and limitations of the work as well as of its qualities. For the intuitive intelligence when it has been sufficiently trained and developed, can take up always the work of the intellect itself and do it with a power and light greater and surer than the power and light of the reason.

What has been said of great creative art, that being the form in which normally our highest and intensest aesthetic satisfaction is achieved, applies to all beauty, beauty in Nature, beauty in life as well as beauty in art. We find that in the end the place of reason and the limits of its achievement are precisely of the same kind



in regard to beauty as in regard to religion. It helps to enlighten and purify the aesthetic instincts and impulses, but it cannot give them their highest satisfaction or guide them to a complete insight. It shapes and fulfils to a certain extent the aesthetic intelligence, but it cannot justly pretend to give the definitive law for the creation of beauty or for the appreciation and enjoyment of beauty. It can only lead the aesthetic instinct, impulse, intelligence towards their greatest possible conscious satisfaction, but not to it ; it has in the end to hand them over to a higher faculty which is in direct touch with the suprarational and in its nature and workings exceeds the intellect.

And for the same reason, because that which we are seeking through beauty is in the end that which we are seeking through religion, the Absolute, the Divine. The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulsions, desires. It is only in the middle a satisfaction in the beauty of the ideas seized, the emotions aroused, the perception of perfect process and harmonious combination. Behind them the soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give, though they may be its channels,—for it is suprasensuous,—nor the reason and intelligence, though they too are a channel,—for it is suprarational, supraintellectual,—but to which through all these veils the soul itself seeks to arrive. When it can get the touch of this universal, absolute beauty, this soul of beauty, this sense of its revelation in any slightest or greatest thing, the beauty of a flower, a form, the beauty and power of a character, an action, an event, a human life, an idea, a stroke of the brush or the chisel or a scintillation of the mind, the colours of

a sunset or the grandeur of the tempest, it is then that the sense of beauty in us is really, powerfully, entirely satisfied. It is in truth seeking, as in religion, for the Divine, the All-Beautiful in man, in nature, in life, in thought, in art ; for God is Beauty and Delight hidden in the variation of his masks and forms. When, fulfilled in our growing sense and knowledge of beauty and delight in beauty and our power for beauty, we are able to identify ourselves in soul with this Absolute and Divine in all the forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive and embody of the All-beautiful, then the aesthetic being in us which was born for this end, has fulfilled himself and risen to his divine consummation. To find highest beauty is to find God ; to reveal, to embody, to create as we say, highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God.

---

# Hymns of the Atris

---

## HYMN TO VARUNA

[ In this hymn there is throughout a sustained double sense. In the exoteric Varuna is hymned as the Asura, omniscient and omnipotent lord and creator, the Godhead in his creative wisdom and might forming the world and maintaining the law of things in the earth and mid-air and heavens. In the esoteric, in which the physical phenomena of the exoteric become symbols, the infinite Godhead is hymned in his all-pervading wisdom and purity opening the three worlds of our being to the Sun of knowledge, pouring down the streams of the Truth, purifying the soul from the falsehood of the lower being and its sin. The hymn is rendered here successively in its exoteric and its esoteric significance. ]

(1)

### TO THE OMNISCIENT CREATOR

1. Sing thou the word vast and profound and dear to renowned Varuna, the All ruler, to him who clove away, even as the cleaver of beasts a skin, that he might spread out the earth under the sun.

2. He spread out the mid-air on the tree-tops, he put strength in the battle-steeds and milk in the

cows; in hearts he put will, the fire in the waters,<sup>1</sup> the sun in heaven and the Soma-plant on the mountain,

3. Varuna poured forth over earth and heaven and the mid-air the holder of the waters whose windows open downward; by him the King of all the world floods the earth as the rain floods a field of barley.

4. Varuna floods the wide earth and heaven, yea, when he desires the milk of heaven, he pours it forth; the mountains are clothed utterly with cloud, the heroes of storm<sup>2</sup> put forth their strength and all is cast down before them.

5. I have declared this vast creative wisdom<sup>3</sup> of the famous and mighty One, even Varuna, he who stood in mid-air as with a measuring-rod and wide he measured out the earth with the sun.

6. Vast is this wisdom of the divine and the greatest of seers and there is none who can do violence against it; therefore the Ocean is one, yet all these rushing rivers pour themselves into it and cannot fill it.

7. Whatsoever sin we have done against the law of Aryaman or the law of Mitra, against brother or friend, against constant neighbour or enemy,<sup>4</sup> cast it away from us, O Varuna.

8. The sin we have done like cunning gamesters who break the law of the play, or have done against

1. Sayana explains, either the electric fire in the water of the clouds or the submarine fire in the ocean.

2. *Iṭrāh*, the Heroes, here the Maruts as storm-gods.

3. Maya, with a strong sense of its root-significance, to measure, form, build or plan out. 4. Or, stranger.

the truth or what we have sinned in ignorance, all these cleave far from us, O god, like loose-hanging fruits: then shall we be beloved of thee, O Varuna.

(2)

### THE MIGHTY MASTER OF INFINITE WISDOM

[ The Rishi hymns Varuna as the Lord of infinite purity and wisdom who opens our earthly being to the unclouded light of the sun of knowledge, pours out the waters of the Truth upon all our triple existence mental, vital and physical and by its power removes all sin and evil and falsehood from our lives. He creates the free wideness of our vital being above our broken search for the delightful objects of our desire, sets the plenitude in our battling life-forces, the yield of heaven in the shining herds of thought; he has put will in our hearts, Agni the divine force in the waters of existence, the Sun of divine knowledge in the highest heaven of mind and the plant that yields the wine of delight on the many-plateaued mountain of our being. All these are the means by which we attain to immortality. He plans out all our physical existence by his wisdom according to the truth-light of the sun of knowledge and creates in us the unity of his own infinite existence and consciousness with all the seven rivers of the Truth-plane pouring their streams of knowledge into it without filling its infinity. ]

1. To Varuna of the far-heard inspirations, the all-ruling,<sup>1</sup> sing bright the inspired word of the

1. The two epithets are intended to give the two sides of the divine being, all-knowledge and all-power ; *mâyâm açurasya çrutasya*. Man divinising himself has to become in the image of the godhead seer and king.

soul in its vastness and depth and delight; for he has cloven wide away the darkness, as one that cleaves away a skin, that he may spread out our earth under his illumining sun.<sup>2</sup>

2. He has spread wide the mid-world above the forests of earth-delight; <sup>3</sup> he has put his plentitude in our battle-steeds of life <sup>4</sup> and their heavenly milk in our shining herds of knowledge. <sup>5</sup> Varuna has put the will <sup>6</sup> in our hearts, the divine fire <sup>7</sup> in the waters, <sup>8</sup> the Sun of Light in our heavens, the plant of Delight on the mountain of our being.<sup>9</sup>

3. Varuna has poured forth over our earth and heaven and mid-world the holder of wisdom with

2. The limitations of the physical mentality are rolled away and it is spread out in a great wideness to receive the revelations and inspirations of the light of the gnosis. 3. The forests or delightful growths of earth (*vana* means also pleasure) are the basis of the mid-world, the vital world in us which is the realm of Vayu, the Life-God. That is the world of the satisfaction of desires. This also is spread out in its full wideness, free from limitation, to receive the Ananda or divine delight by means of the knowledge and law of the Truth. 4. *Aratsū*, meaning both "battlers, strivers" and "horses". 5. *Usriyāsu*, meaning both "bright ones" and "cows". 6. *Kratu*, the will to the divine work, the sacrificial will. 7. Agni, the fire of the divine Will which receives the sacrifice and becomes its priest. 8. The ocean of being or else the waters of Truth which descend from above. 9. Our existence is compared always to a mountain with many plateaus, each a level or plane of being.

his doors opening downward;<sup>10</sup> with him the king of all our being floods our earth like rain flooding the barley.

4. He floods our earth in its wideness and our heaven, yea, Varuna when he desires that milk,<sup>11</sup> pours it forth; the mountains are covered with the cloud, his heroes<sup>12</sup> put forth their strength and cast it away.

5. Vast is this wisdom which I declare of Varuna the far-heard, the mighty Lord, for he stands in our mid-world as with a measuring-rod and wide he measures out our earth with his illumining Sun.<sup>13</sup>

6. Vast is this wisdom of the godhead greatest in seer-knowledge and none can do violence to it; for into him, the one, the ocean, the bright fostering

10. The gnosis opens upward to receive the Infinite in its will and knowledge; here its doors open downwards to flood the lower being. 11. The milk of the Cow Aditi, the infinite consciousness. 12. The Maruts as life-powers attaining to full thought-knowledge; they help Indra to break the cloud or coverer, Vritra, and pour out the waters of Truth and also to bring the light hidden by Vala, that of the hidden sun. Here the two ideas are combined in another image. 13. Man lives in the physical being; Varuna brings the light of the gnosis into it and measures it out, that is, shapes and plans out our earth-existence in the measures of the Truth by means of the mind enlightened by the sun of gnosis: he takes his stand as the Asura in our vital plane, the link between mental and physical, there to receive the light and pass it on to the earth as a creative and determining force.

rivers <sup>14</sup> pour their waters, yet they cannot fill him.

7. All the sin that we have done against thee in thy power of Aryaman or thy power of Mitra or as brother or friend or the eternal indweller or the warrior, <sup>15</sup> that cast away from us.

8. The sin we have done as cunning gamesters offend in their play, our sin against the truth and our sin by ignorance, all these cleave away like loosened things; then may we be dear to thee, O Varun.

---

14 The seven rivers that descend from the Truth-plane, here called *aranayah*, which has the same root-sense as *dhenayah*, the fostering cows. 15. Against the Dasyus.



# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## XXV

If the military necessity, the pressure of war between nations and the need for prevention of war by the assumption of force and authority in the hands of an international body, be it world-State or League of Peace, is that which is most directly driving humanity towards some sort of international unity, there is behind it another necessity which is much more powerful in its action on the modern mind, the economic, the commercial and industrial. Commercialism is a modern sociological phenomenon ; it is, in fact, almost the whole phenomenon of modern society. The economic part of life is, necessarily, always important to an organised community ; but in former times it was simply the first need, it was not that which occupied the thoughts of men, gave the whole tone to the social life, stood at the head and was clearly recognised as standing at the root of social principles. Ancient man was in the group primarily a political being, in the Aristotelian sense,—as soon as he ceased to be primarily religious,—and to this preoccupation he added, wherever he was sufficiently at ease, the preoccupation of thought, art and culture. The economic impulses of the group were worked out as a mechanical necessity, a strong desire in the vital being rather than a leading thought in the mind ; nor was the society regarded or studied as an economical organism except in a very superficial aspect.

The economic man held an honourable, but still a comparatively low position in the society; he was only the third caste or class, the Vaishya: it was the intellectual and political classes,—the Brahmin, thinker, scholar, philosopher and priest, the Kshatriya, ruler and warrior,—who led, and it was their thoughts and preoccupations which gave the tone to society, determined its conscious drift and action, coloured most powerfully all its motives. Commercial interests entered into the relations of states and into the motives of war and peace, but as subordinate and secondary predisposing causes of amity or hostility, and rarely and only as it were accidentally came to be enumerated among the overt and conscious causes of peace, alliance and strife. The political consciousness, the political motive dominated and increase of wealth was primarily regarded as a means of political power and greatness and opulence of the mobilisable resources of the State than as an end in itself or a first consideration.

Everything now is changed. The phenomenon of modern social development is the decline of the Brahmin and Kshatriya, of the Church, the military aristocracy and the aristocracy of letters and culture, and the rise to power or predominance of the commercial and industrial classes, Vaishya and Shudra, capital and labour; having together swallowed up or cast out their rivals they are now engaged in a fratricidal conflict for sole possession in which the completion of the downward force of social gravitation, the ultimate triumph of Labour and the remodelling of all social conceptions and institutions with labour as the first, the most dignified term giving its value to all others seem to be already the visible writing of destiny. At present, however, it is the Vaishya who still predominates and his stamp on the world is commercialism, the predominance of the economical man, the universality of the commercial value or the utilitarian, materially efficient and productive value for everything in

human life, even for knowledge, thought, science, art, poetry and religion, the economical conception of life overriding all others.

For the modern economical view of life culture and its products have chiefly a decorative value ; they are costly and desirable luxuries, not indispensable necessities. Religion is for it a by-product of the human mind with a very restricted utility. Education is indeed of a recognised importance, but its object and form are no longer so much cultural as scientific, utilitarian and economic, its value the preparation of the efficient individual unit to take his place in the body of the organised economical society. Science is of immense importance not because it discovers the secrets of Nature for the advancement of knowledge, but because it utilises them for the creation of machinery and in developing and organising the economical resources of the community. The thought-power of the society, almost its soul-power—if it has any longer so unsubstantial and unproductive a thing as a soul,—is not in its religion or its literature,—though the former drags on a feeble existence and the latter teems and spawns,—but in the daily Press, primarily an instrument of commercialism and governed by the political and commercial spirit and not like literature a direct instrument of culture. Politics, government itself are becoming more and more a machinery for the development of an industrialised society, divided between the service of bourgeois capitalism and the office of a half-involuntary channel for the incoming of economic Socialism. Free thought and culture remain on the surface of this great increasing mass of commercialism influencing and modifying it, but themselves more and more influenced, penetrated, coloured, subjugated by the economic, commercial and industrial view of human life.

This great change has affected profoundly the character of international relations in the past and is likely to

affect them still more openly and powerfully in the future. For there is no apparent probability of a change in a new direction in the immediate future. Certain prophetic voices announce indeed the speedy passing of the age of commercialism. But it is not easy to see how this is to come about; certainly it will not be by a reversion to the predominantly political spirit of the past or the temper and forms of the old type of aristocratic society; the sigh of the extreme conservative mind for the golden age of the past, which was not so golden as it appears to an imaginative eye in the distance, is a vain breath blown to the winds by the rush of the car of the Time-Spirit in the extreme velocity of its progress. The end of commercialism can only come about either by some unexpected development of commercialism itself or through a re-awakening of spirituality in the race and its coming to its own by the subordination to it of the political and economic motives of life.

Certain signs are thought to point in this direction. The religious spirit is reviving and even the old discouraged religious creeds and forms are recovering a kind of vigour; in the secular thought of mankind there are signs of an idealism which increasingly admits a spiritual element among its motives. But all this is as yet slight and superficial; the body of thought and practice, the effective motive, the propelling impulsion remain untouched and unchanged. That impulsion is still towards the industrialising of the human race and the perfection of the life of society as an economic and productive organism; nor is it likely to die as yet by exhaustion, for it has not yet fulfilled itself and is growing, not declining in force. It is aided moreover by modern Socialism which promises to be the master of the future; for Socialism proceeds on the Marxian principle that its own reign has to be preceded by an age of bourgeois capitalism of which it is to be the inheritor and to seize upon its work and organisation in

order to turn it to its own uses and modify it by its own principles and methods. It intends indeed to substitute Labour as the master instead of Capital; but this only means that all activities will be valued by the labour contributed and work produced rather than by the wealth contributed and produced. It will be a change from one side of economism to the other, but not a change from economism to the domination of some other and higher motive of human life. The change itself is likely to be one of the chief factors with which international unification will have to deal and either its greatest aid or its greatest difficulty.

In the past the effect of commercialism has been to bind together the human race into a real economic unity behind its apparent political separativeness. But this was a subconscious unity of inseparable interrelations, of intimate mutual dependence and not either of the spirit or of the conscious organised life. Therefore these interrelations produced at once the necessity of peace and the unavoidability of war. Peace was necessary for their normal action, war frightfully perturbatory to their whole system of being. But because the organised units were politically separate and rival nations, their commercial interrelations became relations of rivalry and strife or rather a confused tangle of exchange and interdependence with hostile separatism. Self-defence against each other by a wall of tariffs, a race for closed markets and fields of exploitation, a struggle for place in markets and fields which could not be monopolised and an attempt at mutual interpenetration in spite of tariff walls have been the chief features of this separatism and this hostility. The outbreak of war under such conditions was only a matter of time; it was bound to come as soon as one nation or else group of nations felt itself either unable to proceed farther by pacific means or threatened with the definite limitation of its expansion by the growing combination of its rivals. The Franco-German war was the last great war

dictated by purely political motives. Since then the political motive has been mainly a cover for the commercial. Not the political subjugation of Servia which could only be a fresh embarrassment to the Austrian empire, but the commercial possession of the outlet through Salonica was the motive of Austrian policy. Pan-Germanism covered the longings of German industry for possession of the great resources and the large outlet into the North Sea offered by the countries along the Rhine ; and to seize African spaces of exploitation and perhaps French coalfields, not to rule over French territory was the drift of its real intention. In Africa, in China, in Persia, in Mesopotamia commercial motives determined political and military action. War is no longer the legitimate child of ambition and earth-hunger, but the bastard offspring of wealth-hunger or commercialism with political ambition as its putative father.

On the other hand the effect, the shock of war have been rendered intolerable by the industrial organisation of human life and the commercial interdependence of the nations. It would be too much to say that it has laid that organisation in ruins, but it has turned it topsy-turvy, deranged its whole system and diverted it to unnatural ends. And it has produced a wide-spread suffering and privation in belligerent and a *gêne* and perturbation of life in neutral countries to which the history of the world offers no parallel. The angry cry that this must not be suffered again and that the authors of this menace and disturbance to the modern industrial organisation of the world, self-styled civilisation, must be visited with condign punishment and remain for some time as international outcasts under a ban and boycott, shows how deeply the lesson has gone home, though it shows also that the real, the inner truth of it all has not yet been understood. Certainly, from this point of view also, the prevention of war must be one of the first preoccupa-

tions of a new ordering of international life ; but how is it to be entirely prevented if the old state of commercial rivalry between politically separate nations is to be perpetuated ? If peace is still to be a covert war, an organisation of strife and rivalry, how is the physical shock to be prevented ? Through the regulation of the inevitable strife and rivalry by a state of law as in the competitive commercial life of a nation before the advent of Socialism ? But that was only possible because the competing individuals or combines were part of a single social organism subject to a single governmental authority. Such a regulation between nations can therefore have no other conclusion, logically or practically, than the formation of a centralised world-State.

But let us suppose that the physical shock of war is prevented, not by law, but by the principle of enforced arbitration in extreme cases which might lead to war, not by the creation of an international authority, but by the overhanging threat of international pressure. The state of covert war will still continue ; it may even take new and disastrous forms. Deprived of other weapons, the nations are bound to have increasing resort to the weapon of commercial pressure, like capital and labour in their chronic state of "pacific" struggle within the limits of the national life. The instruments would be different, but would follow the same principle, that of the strike and the lock-out which are on one side a combined passive resistance by the weaker party to enforce its claims, on the other a passive pressure by the stronger party to enforce its wishes. Between nations, the corresponding weapon to the strike would be a commercial boycott, already used more than once in an unorganised fashion both in Asia and Europe and bound to be extremely effective and telling if organised even by a politically or commercially weak nation,—for the weaker nation is necessary to the stronger, if as nothing else, yet as a

market or as a commercial and industrial victim. The corresponding weapons to the lock-out would be the refusal of capital or machinery, the prohibition of all or of any needed imports into the offending or victim country, or even a naval blockade leading, if long maintained, to industrial ruin or to national starvation. The blockade is a weapon used originally only in a state of war, but it has recently been employed, against Greece, as a substitute for war, and this use may easily be extended in the future. There is always too the weapon of prohibitive tariffs.

It is clear that these weapons need not be employed for commercial purposes or motives only, they may be grasped at to defend or to attack any national interest, to enforce any claim of justice or injustice between nation and nation. It has been shown into how tremendous a weapon commercial pressure can be turned when it is used as an aid to war itself ; if Germany is utterly crushed in the end, the real means of victory will have been the blockade, the cutting off of money, resources and food and the ruin of commerce and industry ; for if any military debacle arrives, it is clear that it will not be directly due to military weakness, but primarily to the diminution and failure of resources, to exhaustion, semi-starvation or worse and the moral depression of an intolerable position cut off from all hope of replenishment and recovery. This lesson also may have in the future considerable application in a time of "peace." Already it is proposed in some quarters to continue the commercial war after the political has ceased, so that Germany may not only be struck off the list of great imperial nations, but also permanently hampered, disabled or even ruined as a commercial and industrial rival. What unexpected applications may not the future make of such a dangerous example ! what rebound may it not have in quarters in which the possibility of such a recoil seems too remote to be entertained even as a far-off contingency !



It has recently been suggested that the future League of Peace might use this weapon of commercial pressure against any recalcitrant nation in place of military force. But so long as there is not a firm international authority, it would not be likely to be limited to such occasions or used only for just and legitimate ends. It might be used by a strong nation secure of general indifference to crush and violate the weak ; it might be used by a combination of strong imperial powers to enforce their selfish and evil will upon the world. Force and coercion of any kind not concentrated in the hands of a just and impartial authority are always liable to abuse and misapplication. Therefore inevitably in the growing unity of mankind the evolution of such an authority must become an early and pressing need. The world-State even in its early and imperfect organisation must begin not only to concentrate military force in its hands, but to commence consciously in the beginning what the national State only arrived at by a slow and natural development, the ordering of the commercial, industrial, economic life of the race and the control, at first, no doubt, only of the principal relations of international commerce, but inevitably in the end of its whole system and principles. Industry and trade being now five sixths of social life and the economic principle the governing principle of society, a world-State which did not control human life in its chief principle and its largest activity, would exist only in name and not in reality.

---

# The Vedic Fire

---

(1)

This is the omniscient who knows the law of our being and is sufficient to his works ; let us build the song of his truth by our thought and make it as if a chariot on which he shall mount. When he dwells with us, then a happy wisdom becomes ours. With him for friend we cannot come to harm.

Whosoever makes him his priest of the sacrifice, reaches the perfection that is the fruit of his striving, a home on a height of being where there is no warring and no enemies ; he confirms in himself an ample energy ; he is safe in his strength, evil cannot lay its hand upon him.

This is the fire of our sacrifice ! May we have strength to kindle it to its height, may it perfect our thoughts. In this all that we give must be thrown that it may become a food for the gods ; this shall bring to us the godheads of the infinite consciousness who are our desire.

Let us gather fuel for it, let us prepare for it offerings, let us make ourselves conscious of the jointings of its times and its seasons. It shall so perfect our thoughts that they shall extend our being and create for us a larger life.

This is the guardian of the world and its peoples, the shepherd of all these herds ; all that is born moves by his rays and is compelled by his flame, both the two-footed

and the four-footed creatures. This is the rich and great thought-awakening of the Dawn within.

This is the priest who guides the march of the sacrifice, the first and ancient who calls to the gods and gives the offerings ; his is the command and his the purification ; from his birth he stands in front, the vicar of our sacrifice. He knows all the works of this divine priesthood, for he is the Thinker who increases in us.

The faces of this God are everywhere and he fronts all things perfectly ; he has the eye and the vision : when we see him from afar, yet he seems near to us, so brilliantly he shines across the gulfs. He sees beyond the darkness of our night, for his vision is divine.

O you godheads, let our chariot be always in front, let our clear and strong word overcome all that thinks the falsehood. O you godheads, know for us, know in us that Truth, increase the speech that finds and utters it.

With blows that slay cast from our path, O thou Flame, the powers that stammer in the speech and stumble in the thought, the devourers of our power and our knowledge who leap at us from near and shoot at us from afar. Make the path of the sacrifice a clear and happy journeying.

Thou hast bright red horses for thy wrath, O Will divine, who are driven by the stormwind of thy passion ; thou roarest like a bull, thou rushest upon the forests of life, on its pleasant trees that encumber thy path, with the smoke of thy passion in which there is the thought and the sight.

At the noise of thy coming even they that wing in the skies are afraid, when thy eaters of the pasture go abroad in their haste. So thou makest clear thy path to thy kingdom that thy chariots may run towards it easily.

This dread and tumult of thee, is it not the wonderful and exceeding wrath of the gods of the Life rushing down on us to found here the purity of the Infinite, the

harmony of the Lover ? Be gracious, O thou fierce Fire, let their minds be again sweet to us and pleasant.

God art thou of the gods, for thou art the lover and friend ; richest art thou of the masters of the Treasure, the founders of the home, for thou art very bright and pleasant in the pilgrimage and the sacrifice. Very wide and far-extending is the peace of thy beatitudes ; may that be the home of our abiding !

That is the bliss of him and the happiness ; for then is this Will very gracious and joy-giving when in its own divine house, lit into its high and perfect flame, it is adored by our thoughts and satisfied with the wine of our delight. Then it lavishes its deliciousness, then it returns in treasure and substance all that we have given into its hands.

O thou infinite and indivisible Being, it is thou ever that formest the sinless universalities of the spirit by our sacrifice ; thou compellest and inspirest thy favourites by thy happy and luminous forcefulness, by the fruitful riches of thy joy. Among them may we be numbered. Thou art the knower of felicity and the increaser here of our life and advancer of our being ! Thou art the godhead !

( 2 )

Burn away from us the sin, flame out on us the bliss.  
Burn away from us the sin !

For the perfect path to the happy field, for the exceeding treasure when we would do sacrifice,—burn away from us the sin !

That the happiest of all these many godheads may be born in us, that the seers who see in our thought may multiply,—burn away from us the sin !

That thy seers, O Flame divine, may multiply and we be new-born as thine,—burn away from us the sin !

When the flaming rays of thy might rush abroad

on every side violently,—burn away from us the sin !

O God, thy faces are everywhere ! thou besiegest us on every side with thy being. Burn away from us the sin !

Let thy face front the Enemy wherever he turns ; bear us in thy ship over the dangerous waters. Burn away from us the sin !

As in a ship over the ocean, bear us over into thy felicity. Burn away from us the sin !

---

# आय

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th October 1917

### CONTENTS

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Ch. XXXVII. From the Undivine to the Divine (2)	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Divine Birth and Divine Works (1)	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXV. The Conditions of Gnosis	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
The Conquest of Self— Disinterestedness	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT XV	
HYMNS OF THE ATRIS.....	A. G.
The First Hymn to the Dawn	
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXVI	



# The Life Divine

---

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### FROM THE UNDIVINE TO THE DIVINE

(2)

We have admitted therefore three propositions about God and the world to which the general reason and consciousness of mankind bear witness, but which they do not ordinarily reconcile, but fall rather into great perplexities of contradiction and denial about them. We have affirmed, first, an omnipresent Divinity pure, perfect and blissful in his being,—not necessarily a personal God, but at any rate an existence, a power, a Self, an Absolute,—without whom, apart from whom nothing could exist, since all exists only by him and in his being. All thinking that is not atheistic or materialistic, has started and must start from this admission. If certain religions seem to suppose an extracosmic Deity who has created a world outside and apart from his own existence, it is only in appearance, in the vulgar and external notion of themselves which they give to the unreflecting mind ; they too when they come to think, to construct a theology, are compelled to admit the omnipresence of God,—for this omnipresence is a necessity, if a real God or Self at all is, a God or Self one and indivisible. Nothing can possibly exist apart from his existence, born from another than he, unsupported by him, unfilled by the breath and power



of his being. Otherwise we have to suppose two Gods, whether an Ormuzd of the good and an Ahriman of the evil or a perfect supracosmic Being and an imperfect cosmic Demiurge, or else have to imagine, what is contrary to reason, that the one Soul and the Power in all are contrary in their nature and separate in their being. Reason tells us, our consciousness feels, that the one pure and absolute Existence exists in all things and beings even as they exist in him and by him, and spiritual experience in its progress confirms these two voices.

But we have affirmed also two propositions which seem to be in disagreement or at least the nodus of whose agreement we do not yet rightly find. We have found only, on one side, that by the supreme consciousness and the supreme power of this omnipresent Divinity in its perfect universal knowledge and divine wisdom all things are perfectly decreed, ordered and governed in their relations and yet, on the other, that the actual relations which we see in our human consciousness are relations of imperfection, of disfiguring limitation, are something that we may call the denial or at least the disfiguring disguise of the Divine. The first of these propositions is really inevitable. It must stand if the omnipresent Divine has anything at all to do with the world he inhabits and with its manifestation, ordering and government.

We may indeed suppose a faincant Deity, like the gods of Epicurus, blissful in himself, observing but careless of the world and its discord and sufferings, or a do-nothing Soul like the Purusha of the Sankhyas who allows Nature to do what she will and is content to reflect all her disorders in his passive and stainless being, or else an inactive Self, the Brahman of the Mayavadins, unconcerned with the works of the cosmic Illusion which has somehow or other, mysteriously, paradoxically originated from him to afflict a world of unreal creatures. But all these are devices of the intellect which fail to go

beyond the apparent dissonances of our twofold experience to their reconciliation and do not solve, but only reaffirm them by a more or less covert dualism and essential division of the Indivisible. They affirm really a dual Godhead, Soul and Nature,—as if Nature, the Power in things, could be anything else than a power of the Soul, the essential Being of things, and therefore its natural result and working,—or an observing Self and a working Godhead,—where again the two must really be one, for the Self of the Godhead must be that one observing Self and no other and the discord or gulf between the Self in knowledge and the same Self in its works remains inexplicable; or else they affirm a double consciousness of the Brahman, one essential and spiritual in which it is itself, is perfect and absolute, and another mental and dynamic—practical, *vyavahārika*,—in which it becomes not itself and with which it has no concern, though we, poor non-existent creatures of its evil dream, have in it a terrible and insistent concern and are compelled to deal with it as real. But this too is a mystification; for this other consciousness is also in the end that of the one Self and what exists in it cannot be unrelated to him or he unrelated to it. As it exists by him, so its ordering and relations must also exist by him; its law must be according to some law of his consciousness and existence, for there is nothing else other than he by which it can be governed. God must be aware of and aware in the world-consciousness which exists in his being and he must be constantly governing and determining its phenomena and operations by the power of his being,—if through nothing else, then through the mere fact of his conscious omnipresence.

Once we admit this government, we must admit its completeness. We cannot suppose that his being and consciousness are infinite and absolute, but his knowledge and will are limited in their possession of things or hampered in their power of working. Nor will it help us to

suppose, either, that he leaves part of the working wholly to something that has come into being in his perfection, but is itself imperfect and the cause of imperfection, whether Nature, a conscious Power of evil or the freedom of the human mind and will. For none of these are in the end quite other than he or independent of his own existence, nature and consciousness. They cannot be held solely responsible for the imperfection of their nature which determines the imperfection of their workings ; for in his being that imperfection has arisen and its works cannot be entirely foreign to his will. What divine omniscience and omnipotence has allowed to arise and work in its omnipresence, its all-existence, that we must consider it to have originated and decreed, since without the fiat of the Being they could not have been, could not remain in existence. The Divine governs the world and there is no other Lord but he ; from that necessity of his original and universal being there can eventually be no escape.

The mere fact of the existence of ignorance, error, limitation, suffering, division and discord in the world is not in itself ; as it seems to us at first, a denial, a disproof of the divine being, consciousness, power, knowledge, will, delight ; they only appear to be such when we take them by themselves separately, not when we see them in a complete view of the universe. When we break off a part from the whole, it may seem to us imperfect, ugly, incomprehensible ; but when we see it in relation to the whole, it recovers its harmony, beauty, meaning and use. God is infinite being ; in this infinite being, we find limited being everywhere ; it is the fact from which we seem to start and to which our narrow ego bears constant witness. But in reality we are not limited, we are infinite. We are infinite because our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence ; we are infinite because our apparent individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with

all things and upward to oneness with the transcendent infinity of the Divine. Thus our ego, which seems to be a limitation of existence, is really a power of infinity, and the boundless multiplicity of Jivas in the world is the most powerful evidence, not at all of the limitation or finiteness of God, but of his illimitable infinity. Their very division, since strive how it may it can never erect itself into a real separateness, is the most wonderful proof of an indivisible unity which division itself cannot divide. Where here, in the world, even in the working of world-existence, is there any denial of God's nature of unity or his indivisible being ?

But if there is no real division or limitation of being, there does seem to be a real limitation of consciousness, an ignorance of self, of which all other imperfection is the consequence. Because we identify ourselves with this superficial ego-consciousness which is our first insistent self-experience, we do arrive at a practical division with all its untoward consequences. Let us see however that from the point of view of God's workings this fact of ignorance is itself an operation of knowledge and not of ignorance. It is in itself a superficial movement, for behind it is an indivisible all-consciousness, whose frontal power, called by us ignorance, limits itself to a particular operation of knowledge, a particular mode of consciousness while keeping back all the rest of its knowledge as a force behind, a store of light to draw upon, a secret working which fills up all the deficiencies of the apparent stumbling of the ignorance and prevents it from leading to another result than that which the all-knowledge has decreed. This power is like the power of concentration in our human mentality by which we absorb ourselves in a particular object and in a particular work and seem to use only so much knowledge, only such ideas as are necessary for it, while the rest, which are alien to it or would interfere with its end, we put back or reject ; yet in reality all the

time it is the indivisible consciousness which we are that has done the work to be done, seen the thing that has to be seen and not any fragment of consciousness or any exclusive ignorance in us.

This power of concentration is rightly held to be one of the greatest powers of the human mentality. Equally the power of putting forth what seems to be an exclusive working of limited knowledge, what presents itself to us as ignorance, is one of the greatest powers of the divine consciousness. It is only a supremely self-possessing knowledge which can thus be powerful to limit itself in the act and yet work out perfectly all its intentions through that apparent ignorance. In the universe we see this supremely self-possessing knowledge work through a multitude of ignorances, each striving to act according to its own blindness, yet through them all it constructs and executes its universal harmonies. Nay, the miracle of its omniscience appears most strikingly of all in what we call the action of the inconscient, when through the complete or partial nescience—more thick than our ignorance—of the atom, the plant, the insect, the animal, it arranges perfectly its order of things and guides the instinctive or inconscient impulse to an end possessed by the all-knowledge which is held behind, yet is operative within the instinct or the impetus. We may say then, here too, that this action of the ignorance or nescience is no real ignorance, but the most wonderful power, sign and proof of an omniscient self-knowledge and all-knowledge. If we need any personal and inner witness to this indivisible all-consciousness behind the ignorance,—all Nature is its external proof,—we can get it in that higher state in which we draw back behind our own ignorance into touch with the divine Idea and Will behind. We see then clearly enough that what we thought to have been done by ourselves in our ignorance, was done through that veil by this omniscience, we discover his work and

his purpose in us and we know that not in vain have we worshipped him in faith, not only as the pure and universal Presence, but as the Lord of all beings and all Nature.

As with the cause, so with its consequences. What seems to us incapacity, weakness, impotence, limitation of power, the hampered struggle and fettered labour of our will, is from the point of view of the Divine in his self-workings the just limitation of his omniscient power by the free will of that Power itself so that it shall be in exact correspondence with the work that it has to do, with the balance of the sum of forces in which it is a part and with the larger result of which its own results are an indivisible portion. Behind this limitation of power, is the All-Power; in this limitation that All-Power is at work; through the sum of many limited workings the indivisible Omnipotence executes infallibly and sovereignly its purposes. This power to limit its force and to work through that self-limitation, by what we call labour, struggle, difficulty, by what seems to us a series of failures or half-baulked successes, is not therefore a sign, a proof, a reality of weakness, but a sign, a proof, a reality—the greatest possible—of absolute omnipotence.

So too with suffering; it is a consequence of the limitation of consciousness and force which prevents us from mastering and assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force, so that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and affects us in the form of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord born of division between our being and this being that meets us. Behind is the All-delight of the universal being which makes its account of the contact, has a delight first in the suffering of it and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation. Nor is this All-delight present in the universal alone, but it is here secret in ourselves, as we discover when we can go back from our outer consciousness into the Divine within us and find that so it is the

psychic being is really dealing even with its most perverse experiences and that there is a divine meaning and use in our most poignant sufferings. Nothing but this All-delight could dare or bear to impose such experiences on itself; nothing else could turn them thus to its own utility. So too nothing but an inalienable harmony of being inherent in a alienable unity of being could throw out so many harshest apparent discords which yet are unable to do anything else but serve, secure, turn into elements of a universal rhythm and harmony. At every turn it is the divine Reality which we discover behind that which we are yet compelled by the nature of the superficial consciousness in which we dwell to call undivine.

And yet, even when we so regard the universe, we cannot dismiss as entirely false and unreal the values that are given to it by our own limited human consciousness. Grief, pain, suffering, error, falsehood, ignorance, weakness, vileness, incapacity, deviation of will and denial of will, egoism, limitation, division from other beings with whom we should be one, all that makes up evil, are facts of the world-consciousness, not entire fictions and unrealities, although they are facts whose full and true sense or true value is not that which we give to them. Still our sense of them is a part of the true sense, our values of them are necessary to their complete values. Without experience of pain we cannot get all the infinite value of the divine delight of which pain is in travail; all ignorance is a penumbra which environs an orb of knowledge, every error is full of the possibility and the effort at a new discovery of truth; every weakness and failure is a sounding of gulfs of power and potentiality; all division is intended to enrich by its experiences of various sweetness of unification the joy of realised unity. All this imperfection is to us evil, but all evil is in travail of the eternal good; for all is an imperfection which is the

condition of a greater perfection in the manifesting of the hidden divinity.

Such is everywhere the law of the manifestation. True, it is a law of manifestation only and need not have been there if there were no movement of manifestation ; but the manifestation being given the law is necessary. It will not do merely to say that the law and all its circumstances are an unreality created by the mental consciousness, non-existent in God, and to get out of the manifestation into God's pure being is the only wisdom. In a sense they are creations of the mental consciousness, but only secondarily ; really they are, as we have seen, creations of the divine consciousness projecting mind away from its all-knowledge so as to realise these opposite or contrary values of its all-power, all-knowledge, all-delight, all-being and unity. Obviously this action and these fruits of the divine consciousness cannot be a mere mistake of God's without any meaning in the divine wisdom, without any purpose of the divine joy, power and knowledge to justify their existence. Justification there is, even if it reposes for us upon a mystery.

Now if, accepting this law, we say that all things are fixed in their statutory and stationary law of being, man too must be fixed in his imperfections, his ignorance and sin and weakness and vileness and suffering. His perpetual attempt to arise out of them can have no issue in the world itself, in life itself ; its one issue, if there is any, must be by escape out of life, out of the world, out of his human existence and therefore out of its eternally unsatisfactory law of imperfect being either into a heaven of the gods or of God or into the pure ineffability of the Absolute. He can never really deliver out of the ignorance and falsehood the truth and knowledge, out of the evil and ugliness the good and beauty, out of the weakness and vileness the power and glory, out of the grief and suffering the joy and delight which are contained in them and



of which they are the first conditions. He must cut them away from him and with them their balancing opposites, with the ignorance the human knowledge, with the evil the human good, with the weakness the human strength and power, with the suffering the human love and joy ; for these are inseparably entwined together, conjoint dualities, negative pole and positive pole of the same unreality, and since they cannot be elevated and transformed, they must be both abandoned. Humanity must not be fulfilled in divinity ; it must cease, be condemned and rejected. Whether the result will be an individual enjoyment of the absolute divine nature or presence or a Nirvana in the featureless Absolute, is a point on which religions and philosophies differ ; but in either case human existence on earth is taken as condemned to eternal imperfection by the very law of its nature ; it is an eternally and unchangeably undivine manifestation of the Divine. The soul by taking on manhood, by the very fact of birth has fallen from the Divine, has committed an original sin, which it is man's spiritual aim, as soon as he is enlightened, thoroughly and unflinchingly to cancel.

In that case, the only reasonable explanation of such a paradoxical manifestation or creation, is that it is a Lila, a play, an amusement of God, in which he, as it were, pretends to be undivine for the sole pleasure of the pretence or else has created the undivine, created ignorance, sin and suffering for the joy of creation or, as some religions curiously suppose, that there may be inferior creatures who will praise and glorify him for his eternal goodness, wisdom, bliss and omnipotence and try feebly to come an inch nearer to the goodness in order to share the bliss on pain of punishment—by some supposed eternal—if, as the vast majority must by their very imperfection, they fail. To the doctrine of such a Lila or such a creation it has been objected that a God, himself all-blissful, who delights in the suffering of creatures or

imposes such suffering on them for the faults of his own imperfect creation, would be no God, but a Demon against whom every noble soul must revolt. Certainly, if human souls are quite different and separate from the Divine, the objection would have force, though even then revolt against the Eternal and All-powerful might be noble, but would be obviously vain. But the Indian doctrine of the Lila in its most philosophical form supposes that there is a unity, complete or partial between the human soul and the divine ; it is God who manifests himself in humanity, it is God in man who puts on this imperfection, it is God who through humanity bears this suffering; and by this Divine within all humanity will be drawn up into the Divine. The Lila then is indeed a paradox, but it ceases to be cruel or revolting ; we can at most regard it as strange, perverse, inexplicable.

But the paradox loses much of its strangeness if we accept the idea not of fixed grades, but of a progressive ascent, a progressive divine manifestation from the inconscient to the superconscient or all-conscient through the animal and the human consciousness. Imperfection is then a term and a necessary term of the manifestation ; all the divine nature being concealed but present in the inconscient must be gradually delivered out of it and this graduality necessitates in between a partial unfolding ; it demands a mid-stage with gradations above and under it,—precisely such a stage as the mental consciousness of man, part knowledge, part ignorance, leaning on the inconscient, rising to the all-conscious Divine. But a partial unfolding means imperfection and must take as its basis or its support an apparent perversion, a seeming contrary of all that characterises the divine nature, infinity, unity, all-consciousness, all-power, all-harmony, all-delight ; without that perversion imperfection can have no standing-ground, cannot freely manifest. Partial knowledge is imperfect knowledge and imperfect knowledge is to that

extent ignorance, a contrary of the divine Nature, and in its outlook on what is beyond its knowledge, becomes error, a perversion ; so with all the other essential principles of the Divine. As to why the Divine should take delight in such a progressive manifestation, we may call it a mystery. But is it really so much of a mystery ? Is not a play of self-concealing and self-finding one of the most strenuous joys that conscious being can give to itself ? What greater pleasure has man himself than victory which is in its nature the conquest of difficulties, a victory in knowledge, in power, in creation, in delight,—or than union which is in its nature the joy of a meeting with a self from which we were divided ? If we interrogate profoundly enough our own psychology, is it not easy after all to understand the secret of the Lila of the Divine ?

This truth of the progressive manifestation is then the clue we needed for the reconciliation of our three propositions,—the truth of the soul ascending out of the inconscient through plant and animal to man and by man to the Divine. The index of man's general possibility of realising the Divine in himself is, as we have often had to say, first that consciousness of his imperfection which he alone of earthly beings possesses and, secondly, his eternal hope of victory and perfection. If all were a blind play of Nature or capricious Lila of some wanton or blundering Deity, these things might have no meaning, they might be accidents, errors or lures of Nature and our conclusion would not follow ; but since we find that the divine Wisdom has ordered all things and is present in every least movement, this undying hope must have infallibly a sense, a justification, a fulfilment. But here the oft-repeated question arises whether its purpose is for the highest sort of man to evolve, to shape out of himself a divine man or superman and then for the race to perish or sink back into an animal inferiority, or whether it is not rather a general transformation or

ascent of all the individuals of the race.

In support of the first view we must acknowledge that the impulse to perfect self-transcendence, the knowledge of the inner divinity and the aspiration to the divine nature are not conscious in all the individuals of the race. It is the hard-earned privilege of the few, the best ; it is not born with man, but born in him, is indeed the first light of his new birth, the mark of the twice-born ; it is not the beginning, but a very advanced stage of man's evolution. He looks downward first to the animal ; afterwards he looks upward to the Godhead. But on the other hand the sign of the divine nature is not only the illumination of the Truth and the glory of the Power and the ecstasy of the Bliss, but the throb of a divine and universal love which desires always to communicate its riches and, when it reaches its height, cannot tolerate that even one human being should remain unsaved, satisfied with his crude humanity, much less sink back to the animal. The divine man not only transcends himself in unity with the Divine, but extends himself into unity with his fellow beings, and the outward sign and effect of that unity is this that as he has remade himself in the divine image, so he remakes other men in his own image which is that of the divine. That would seem to be in this matter the key to the will of the Supreme in humanity, the indication that it is a general will for the race, not a specialisation of some for a new creature and a new creation.

But again another oft-repeated question, — since this ascent is admittedly from plane to plane of our being, does it culminate by the abandonment all the lower planes, or rather does it not include all the lower planes, the divine not only ascending from them but embracing and returning upon them, down to earth and body and matter, our lowest, our footing and foundation ? In the first case the evolution begins here, but is fulfilled elsewhere ; in the second the material plane is the scene of

the divine victory. It would surely seem that as all the difficulties that are to be conquered are laid down here, here also should be their solution, that where the battle takes place, there should be the victory. Otherwise is the victory real ? The whole evolution up to man takes place here ; his own evolution takes place here ; why not then the fulfilment of his evolution ? But this answer only creates a strong probability and is not absolutely conclusive. We have to reply then, first, that part of the eternal hope of mankind is the longing for the perfectibility of the human race upon earth and there is no reason to suppose that this part alone of the divine idea in his aspiration is a mistake ; secondly, that the nature of the evolution, the ascent confirms our hope. For, if we examine the evolution, we shall see that it is a triple movement, a self-enlargement and a self-transcendence, but also a transformation of what is transcended. We must glance at this triple character of the evolution and see where it leads us.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

(1)

In speaking of this Yoga in which action and knowledge become one, the Yoga of the sacrifice of works with knowledge,—works fulfilled in knowledge, knowledge supporting works,—offered to the Purushottama, the supreme Divinity who becomes manifest within us as Narayana, Lord of all our being and action seated secret in our hearts for ever, who becomes manifest even in the human form as the Avatar, the divine birth taking possession of our humanity, Krishna has declared in passing that this was the ancient and original Yoga which he gave to Vivasvan, the Sun-God, Vivasvan to Manu, the first man, Manu to Ikshvaku, and so it came down from royal sage to royal sage till it was lost in the great lapse of Time and is now renewed for Arjuna, because he is the lover and devotee, friend and comrade of the Avatar. For this, he says, is the highest secret,—thus claiming for it a superiority to all other forms of Yoga, because those others lead to the impersonal Brahman or to a personal Deity, to a liberation in actionless knowledge or a liberation in absorbed beatitude, but this gives the highest secret and the whole secret ; it leads to divine peace and divine works, to divine knowledge, action and ecstasy unified in a perfect freedom ; it unites into itself all the Yogic paths as the highest being of the Divine reconciles

and makes one in itself all the different and even contrary powers and principles of its manifested being. Therefore this Yoga of the Gita is not, as some contend, only the Karmayoga, one and the lowest, according to them, of the three paths, but a highest Yoga synthetic and integral directing Godward all the powers of our being.

Arjuna takes the declaration about the transmission of the Yoga in its most physical sense,—there is another significance in which it can be taken,—and asks how the Sun-God, one of the first-born of beings, ancestor of the Solar dynasty, can have received the Yoga from the man Krishna who is only now born into the world. Krishna does not reply, as we might have expected him to have done, that it was as the Divine who is the source of all knowledge that he gave the Word to the Deva who is his form of knowledge, giver of all inner and outer light,—*satvitar devasya yo no dhiya't prachodayât*; he accepts instead the opportunity which Arjuna gives him of declaring his concealed Godhead, a declaration for which he had prepared when he gave himself as the divine example for the worker who is not bound by his works, but which he has not yet explicitly made. He now openly announces himself as the incarnate Godhead, the Avatar.

We have had occasion already, when speaking of the divine Teacher, to state briefly the doctrine of Avatarhood as it appears to us in the light of Vedanta, the light in which the Gita presents it to us. We must now look a little more closely at this Avatarhood and at the significance of the divine Birth of which it is the outward expression; for that is a link of considerable importance in the integral teaching of the Gita. And we may first translate the words of the Teacher himself in which the nature and purpose of Avatarhood are given summarily and remind ourselves also of other passages or references which bear upon it. "Many are my lives that are past, and thine also, O Arjuna; all of them I know, but thou knowest

not, O scourge of the foe. Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and come into birth by my self-Maya. For whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right I am born from age to age. He who knoweth thus in its right principles my divine birth and my divine work, when he abandons his body, comes not to rebirth, he comes to Me, O Arjuna. Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of me, taking refuge in me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at my nature of being (*mad-bhâvam*, the divine nature of the Purushottama). As men approach me, so I accept them to my love (*bhajāmi*); men follow in every way my path, O son of Pritha."

But most men, the Gita goes on to say, desiring the fulfilment of their works, sacrifice to the gods, to various forms and personalities of the one Godhead, because the fulfilment (*siddhi*) that is born of works,—of works without knowledge,—is swift and easy in the human world; it belongs indeed to that world alone. The other, the divine self-fulfilment in man by the sacrifice with knowledge to the supreme Godhead, is more difficult; its results belong to a higher plane of existence and are less easily grasped. Men therefore follow the fourfold law of their nature and works and on this plane of mundane action they seek the Godhead through his various qualities. But, says Krishna, though I am the doer of the fourfold works and creator of its fourfold law, yet I must be known also as the non-doer, the imperishable, the immutable Self. "Works affect me not, nor have I desire for the fruit of works," for God is the impersonal beyond this egoistic personality and this strife of the modes of Nature, and as the Purushottama also, the impersonal Perso-



nality, he possesses this supreme freedom even in works. Therefore the doer of divine works even while following the fourfold law has to know and live in that which is beyond, in the impersonal self and so in the supreme Godhead. "He who thus knows me is not bound by his works. So knowing was work done by the men of old who sought liberation; do therefore, thou also, work of that more ancient kind done by ancient men."

The second portion of these passages which has here been given in substance, explains the nature of divine works, *divyam karma*, with the principle of which we have had to deal in the last essay; the first, which has been fully translated, explains the way of the divine birth, *divyam janma*, the Avatarhood. But we have to remark carefully that the upholding of Dharma in the world is not the only object of the descent of the Avatar, that great mystery of the Divine manifest in humanity; for the upholding of the Dharma is not an all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, but is only the general condition of a higher aim and a more supreme and divine utility. For there are two aspects of the divine birth; one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, *madbhāvam āgatah*; it is the being born anew in a second birth of the soul. It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve. This double aspect in the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood is apt to be missed by the cursory reader satisfied, as most are, with catching a superficial view of its profound teachings, and it is missed too by the formal commentator petrified in the rigidity of the schools. Yet it is necessary, surely, to the whole meaning of the doctrine. Otherwise the Avatar idea would be only a dogma,

a popular superstition, or an imaginative or mystic deification of historical or legendary supermen, not what the Gita makes all its teaching, a deep philosophical and religious truth and an essential part of or step to the supreme mystery of all, *rahasyam uttamam*.

If there were not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation. The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatar establishes is given for that purpose chiefly ; the Christ, Krishna, Buddha stands in its centre as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each Incarnation holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate ; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body, *mānushīm tanum ācṛitam*, and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity.

That the Gita contains as its kernel this second and real object of the Avatarhood, is evident from this passage itself, but it becomes clearer if we take it, not by itself,—always the wrong way to deal with the texts of the Gita,—

but in connection with other passages and with the whole teaching. We have to remember and take together its doctrine of the one Self in all, of the Godhead seated in the heart of every creature, its teaching about the relations between the Creator and his creation, its strongly emphasised idea of the *vibhūti*,—noting too the language in which the Teacher gives his own divine example of selfless works which applies equally to the human Krishna and the divine Lord of the worlds, and giving their due weight to such passages as that in the ninth chapter "Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences"; and we have to read in the light of these ideas this passage we find before us and its declaration that by the knowledge of his divine birth and divine works man comes to the Divine and by becoming full of him and even as he and taking refuge in him they arrive at his nature and status of being, *mad-bhāvam*. For then we shall understand the divine birth and its object, not as an isolated and miraculous phenomenon, but in its proper place in the whole scheme of the world-manifestation; without that we cannot arrive at its divine mystery, but shall either scout it altogether or accept it ignorantly and, it may be, superstitiously or fall into the petty and superficial ideas of the modern mind about it by which it loses all its inner and helpful significance.

For to the modern mind Avatarhood is one of the most difficult to accept or to understand of all the ideas that are streaming in from the East upon the rationalised human consciousness. It is apt to take it at the best for a mere figure for some high manifestation of human power, character, genius, great work done for the world or in the world, and at the worst to regard it as a superstition,—to the heathen a foolishness and to the Greeks a stumblingblock. The materialist, necessarily, cannot even

look at it, since he does not believe in God ; to the rationalist or the Deist it is a folly and a thing of derision ; to the thoroughgoing dualist who sees an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, it sounds like a blasphemy. The rationalist objects that if God exists, he is extracosmic or supracosmic and does not intervene in the affairs of the world, but allows them to be governed by a fixed machinery of law,—he is, in fact, a sort of far-off constitutional monarch or spiritual King Log, at the best an indifferent inactive Spirit behind the activity of Nature, like some generalised or abstract witness Purusha of the Sankhyas ; he is pure Spirit and cannot put on a body, infinite and cannot be finite as the human being is finite, the ever unborn creator and cannot be the creature born into the world,—these things are impossible even to his absolute omnipotence. To these objections the thoroughgoing dualist would add that God is in his person, his rôle and his nature different and separate from man ; the perfect cannot put on human imperfection ; the unborn personal God cannot be born as a human personality ; the Ruler of the worlds cannot be limited in a nature-bound human action and in a perishable human body. These objections, so formidable at first sight to the reason, seem to have been present to the mind of the Teacher in the Gita when he says that although the Divine is unborn, imperishable in his self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet he assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of his Nature and by force of his self-Maya ; that he whom the deluded despise because lodged in a human body, is verily in his supreme being the lord of all ; that he is in the action of the divine consciousness the creator of the fourfold Law and the doer of the works of the world and in the silence of the divine consciousness at the same time the impartial witness of the works of his own Nature,—for he is always, beyond both the silence and the action, the supreme Purushottama. And the Gita is able to meet

all these oppositions, to reconcile all these contraries because it starts from the Vedantic view of existence, of God and the universe.

For in the Vedantic view of things all these apparently formidable objections are null and void from the beginning. The idea of the Avatar is not indeed indispensable to its scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception. For all here is God, is the Spirit or Self-existence, is Brahman, *ekamevadvitīyam*,—there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be nothing else, can be nothing other and different from it ; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness ; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that ; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection, that assumption. Far from the world being a mechanism of law with no soul or spirit intervening in the movement of its forces of the action of its minds and bodies,—only some original indifferent Spirit passively existing somewhere outside or above it,—the whole world and every particle of it is on the contrary nothing but the divine force in action and that divine force determines and governs its every movement, inhabits its every form, possesses here every soul and mind ; all is in God and in him moves and has its being, in all he is, acts and displays his being ; every creature is the disguised Narayan.

Far from the unborn being unable to assume birth, all

Beings are even in their individuality unborn spirits, eternal without beginning or end, and in their reality and their universality all are the one unborn Spirit of whom birth and death are only a phenomenon of the assumption and change of forms. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe ; but the imperfection appears in the form and action of the mind or body assumed, subsists in the phenomenon,—in that which assumes it, there is no imperfection, even as in the Sun which illumines all there is no defect of light or of vision, but only in the capacities of the individual organ of vision. Nor does God rule the world from some remote heaven, but by his intimate omnipresence ; each finite working of force is an act of infinite Force and not of a limited separate self-existent energy labouring in its own underived strength ; every finite working of will and knowledge is an act of the infinite all-will and all-knowledge. God's rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government ; he governs all because he exceeds all, but also because he dwells within all movements and is their absolute soul and spirit. Therefore none of the objections opposed by our reason to the possibility of Avatarhood can stand in their principle ; for the principle is a vain division made by the intellectual reason which the whole phenomenon and the whole reality of the world are busy every moment contradicting and disproving.

But still, apart from the possibility, there is the question of the actual divine working,—whether actually the divine consciousness does come forward from beyond the veil and act directly in the phenomenal, the finite, the mental and material, the limited, the imperfect. The finite is indeed nothing but a definition, a face-value of the Infinite's self-representations to its own variations of consciousness ; the real value of each finite phenomenon is an infinite value, is indeed the very Infinite. Each being is infinite in its self-existence, whatever it may be in the

action of its phenomenal nature, its temporal self-representation. The man is not, when we look closely, himself alone, a rigidly separate self-existent individual, but humanity in a mind and body of itself ; and humanity too is no rigidly separate self-existent species or genus, it is the All-existence, the universal Godhead figuring itself in the type of humanity ; there it works out certain possibilities, develops, evolves, as we now say, certain powers of its manifestation. What it evolves, is itself, is the Spirit.

For what we mean by Spirit is self-existent being with an infinite power of consciousness and unconditioned delight in its being ; it is either that or nothing, or at least nothing which has anything to do with man and the world or with which, therefore, man or the world has anything to do. Matter, body is only a massed motion of force of conscious being employed as a starting-point for the variable relations of consciousness working through its power of sense ; nor is Matter anywhere really void of consciousness, for even in the atom, the cell there is, as is now made abundantly clear by modern Science, a power of will, an intelligence at work ; but that power is the power of will and intelligence of the Self, Spirit or Godhead within it, it is not the separate, self-derived will or idea of the mechanical cell or atom. This universal will and intelligence, involved, develops its powers from form to form, and on earth at least it is in man that it draws nearest to the full divine and there first becomes, even in the form, conscious of its divinity. But still there too there is a limitation, there is that imperfection of the manifestation which prevents the lower forms from having the self-knowledge of their identity with the Divine. For in each limited being the limitation of the phenomenal action is accompanied by a limitation also of the phenomenal consciousness which defines the nature of the being and makes the inner-difference between creature and creature. The Divine

works behind governing its special manifestation through this outer and imperfect consciousness and will, itself secret in the cavern, *guhâyâm*, as the Veda puts it, or as the Gita expresses it, "In the heart of all existences the Lord abides turning all existences as if mounted on a machine by Maya". This secret working, the Lord hidden in the heart from the egoistic nature-consciousness through which he works, is God's universal method with creatures. Why then should we suppose that in any form he comes forward into the frontal, the phenomenal consciousness for a more direct and consciously divine action? Obviously, to break the veil between himself and humanity which man in his own nature could never lift.

The Gita explains the ordinary imperfect action of the creature by its subjection to the mechanism of Prakriti and its limitation by the self-representations of Maya. These two terms are only complementary aspects of one and the same effective force of divine consciousness. Maya is not essentially illusion,—the element or appearance of illusion only enters in by the ignorance of the lower Prakriti, Maya of the three modes of Nature,—it is the divine consciousness in its power of various self-representation of its being, while Prakriti is the effective force of that consciousness which operates to work out such self-representation according to its own law and fundamental idea, *svabhava* and *svadharma*, in its own proper quality and particular force of working, *gunakarma*. "Leaning upon my own Nature (Prakriti) I create (loose forth into various being) all this multitude of existences, all helplessly subject to the control of Nature." Those who know not the Divine lodged in the human body, are ignorant of it because they are grossly subject to this mechanism of Prakriti and dwell in an Asuric nature that deludes with desire and bewilders with egoism the will and the intelligence, *mohinîm prakritim âciritâh*. For the Purushottama within is not manifest to every being; he



conceals himself, utterly he envelops himself in his Yoga-mâyâ.\* "All this world" says the Gita "because it is bewildered by the three states of being determined by the modes of Nature, fails to recognise me; for this my divine Maya of the modes of Nature is hard to get beyond; those cross beyond it who approach Me; but those who dwell in the Asuric nature of being, have their knowledge reft from them by Maya." In other words, there is the inherent consciousness of the Divine in all, for in all the Divine dwells; but he dwells there covered by his Maya and the essential self-knowledge of beings is reft from them, turned into the error of egoism by the action of Maya, the action of the mechanism of Prakriti. Still by drawing back from the mechanism of Nature to her inner and secret Master man can become conscious of the indwelling Divinity.

Now it is notable that with a slight but important variation of language the Gita describes in the same way both the action of the Divine in bringing about the ordinary birth of creatures and his action in his birth as the Avatar. "Leaning upon my own Nature, *prakritim sâṁ avashtabhyā*," it will say later "I loose forth variously, *visrijāmi*, this multitude of creatures helplessly subject owing to the control of Prakriti, *avaçam prakriter vaçāt*." "Standing upon my own Nature" it says here "I am born by my self-Maya, *prakritim sâṁ adhiṣṭhāya ... ātmamāyayā*, I loose forth myself, *atmānam srijāmi*." The action implied in the word *avashtabhyā* is a forceful downward pressure by which the object controlled is overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in its movement or working and becomes helplessly subject to the controlling power, *avaçam vaçāt*; Nature in this action becomes mechanical and its multitude of creatures are held helpless in the

\* *Vāhan: prakṛteṁ sarvasya goçamāṇā-samāvṛitāḥ.*

mechanism, not lords of their own action. On the contrary the action implied in the word *adhiṣṭhāya*, is a dwelling in, but also a standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the indwelling Godhead, *adhiṣṭātri devatā*, in which the Purusha is not driven by the Prakriti through ignorance, but rather the Prakriti is full of the light and the will of the Purusha. Therefore in the normal birth that which is loosed forth,—created, as we say,—is the multitude of creatures or becomings, *bhūtagrahaṇam*; in the divine birth that which is loosed forth, self-created, is the self-conscious self-existent being, *atmānam*; for the Vedantic distinction between *atmā* and *bhūtāni* is that which is made in European philosophy between the Being and its becomings. In both cases Maya is the means of the creation or manifestation, but in the divine birth it is by self-Maya, *ātma-māyavā*, not the involution in the lower Maya of the ignorance, but the conscious action of the self-existent Godhead in its phenomenal self-representation, well aware of its operation and its purpose,—that which the Gita calls elsewhere *Yoganāyā*. In the ordinary birth *Yoganāyā* is used by the Divine to envelop and conceal itself from the lower consciousness, so it becomes for us the means of the Ignorance, *Jādyānāyā*; but it is by this same *Yoganāyā* that self-knowledge also is made manifest in the return of our consciousness to the divine, it is the means of the knowledge, *Vidyānāyā*; and in the divine birth it so operates—as the knowledge controlling and enlightening the works which are ordinarily done in the Ignorance.

The language of the Gita shows therefore that the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially the opposite of the ordinary birth even though the same means are used, because it is not the birth into the Ignorance, but the birth of the knowledge, not a physical phenomenon, but a soul-birth. It is the

Soul's coming into birth as the self-existent Being controlling consciously its becoming, not lost to self-knowledge in the cloud of the ignorance. It is the Soul born into the body as lord of Nature, standing above and operating in her freely by its will, not entangled and helplessly driven round and round in the mechanism ; for it works in the knowledge and not, as most do, in the ignorance. It is the secret Soul in all coming forward from its governing secrecy behind the veil to possess wholly in a human type, but as the Divine, the birth which ordinarily it possesses from behind the veil as the Ishwara, but in front is rather possessed by it because there it is the partially conscious being, the Jiva lost to self-knowledge and bound in its works through subjection to Nature. The Avatar \* therefore is the direct manifestation in humanity by Krishna the divine Soul of that divine condition of being to which Arjuna, the human soul, the type of a highest human being, a Vibhuti, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity. It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below, the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb, the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence.

\* The word Avatara means a descent : it is a coming down of the Divine below the line which divides the divine from the human world or status.

# The Synthesis of Yoga

---

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE CONDITIONS OF GNOSIS

Knowledge is the first principle of the Vijnana, but knowledge is not its only power ; like every other plane of being it founds itself upon that particular principle which is naturally the key of all its motions, but it also takes up all the powers of being and moulds and modifies their nature and working into conformity with its own original and dominant law. In the mental being, for example, mind-sense or intelligence is the original and dominant principle. The mental being is in his central and determining nature intelligence ; a centre of intelligence, a massed movement of intelligence, a receptive and radiating action of intelligence. He has the intelligent sense of his own being, the intelligent sense of other existence than his own, the intelligent sense of his own nature and activities and the activities of others, the intelligent sense of the nature of things and persons and their relations with himself and each other. That makes up his experience of existence. He has no other knowledge of existence, no knowledge of life and matter except as they make themselves sensible to him and capable of being seized by his intelligence ; what he does not sense and conceive, is to him practically non-existent. Man is a mental being, but one cased in Matter and so has to

start with the action of the physical senses which are all channels of material contact, he does not start with the mind-sense ; but even so he does not and cannot make use of anything conveyed by these physical organs until and unless they are taken hold of by the mind-sense and turned into stuff and value of his intelligent being. What in the lower world is a pranic, a nervous, a dynamic action and reaction, becomes in him sense of force, sense of desire, sense of will, sense of intelligent will-action or mentally conscious sense of force-action. His delight of being translates itself into sense of pleasure and its perversion pain, feeling-sensation of liking and disliking, intelligence of delight and failure of delight,—all phenomena of the mind-sense. That which is above him and around him, that in which he lives,—God, the universal being,—are non-existent and unreal to him until he gets the mental sense of the Infinite and an intelligent consciousness of the superself.

So the *vijnānamaya* being is in its nature truth-consciousness, a centre and circumference of the truth-vision of things, a massed movement or subtle body of gnosis, a receptive and radiating action of the truth-power of things according to the inner law of their being. This truth of things at which we arrive in the gnosis,—for from that it itself originally starts,—is a truth of unity, of oneness, unity originating diversity, unity in multiplicity, but still unity always, an indefeasible oneness. Therefore state of gnosis, the condition of *vijnānamaya* being, implies a self-identification of ourselves with all existence and with all existences, a universal pervasiveness, a universal comprehension. The *vijnānamaya* Purusha has normally the consciousness of being infinite, normally also the consciousness of containing the world in itself ; it is not like the mental being normally bound to the consciousness of being contained in the world. Therefore the deliverance from ego is the first elementary step towards the being of

the gnosis ; so long as we live at all in the ego, it is idle to hope for this higher reality. The least reversion to ego-thought, ego-action, ego-will brings back the consciousness tumbling out of such gnostic Truth as it has attained into the falsehoods of the divided mind. A secure universality of being is the very basis of this higher consciousness ; we have to feel ourselves ~~one~~ with all things and beings, to identify ourselves with them, to become aware of them as ourselves, their being as our own, their consciousness as our own, their energy as our own. We have to learn how to be one self with all.

This universality is impossible to achieve in its completeness so long as we feel ourselves to be a consciousness lodged in this individual mind, life and body. There has to be a certain elevation of the Purusha out of the physical and even the mental into the *rijnānamaya* body. Neither the brain or its corresponding mental "lotus" can remain the centre of our thinking, nor the heart or its corresponding "lotus" can remain the centre of our sensational being. The conscious centre of being, thought and action rises out of the body and mind and takes its free station above them. We have no longer the sensation of living in the body, but of being above it as its lord, possessor or Ishwara and of encompassing it with a wider than the physical consciousness. We come to realise with a very living force of reality, normal and continuous, what the sages meant when they spoke of the soul carrying the body and said too that the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul. From above and not from the brain we ideate, we will, the brain-action being only a response and movement of the physical machinery to the shock of the thought-force and will-force from above ; from above all is originated ; above, all that corresponds in gnosis to our present mental activity, takes place.

But this centre, this action is free, not bound, especially not involved in body or shut up in separate indivi-

duality. For we have a consciousness as it were diffused and extending everywhere and the centre is a mere convenience for individual action. The real nature of our conscious activities is universal, one with those of the universal being, proceeding from universality to a supple and variable individualisation. It is the awareness of an infinite being acting universally though with emphasis on an individual formation of its energies ; it is not what we now understand by individuality. This state of consciousness is so abnormal to our present mode of being that to the rational man it may seem impossible or even a state of alienation ; but even for the mental intelligence it vindicates itself by its greater calm, freedom, light, power, effectivity of will, verifiable truth of ideation. For it begins even on the higher levels of liberated mind, but rises to perfect self-possession only in the gnosis.

The infinite has to become to us the primal, the actual reality ; it has to become impossible for us to think of or realise the finite apart from our fundamental sense of the infinite, in which alone the finite can live, can form itself, can have any reality. So long as the finite is to our consciousness the first fact, the foundation of all our thinking, feeling and willing, the normal reality from which we can rise occasionally or frequently to an idea and sense of the infinite, we are very far from the gnosis. The infinite on the contrary has to be our normal consciousness of being, its first fact, the foundation from which everything finite forms itself, the origination of all our thought, will and delight. But this infinite is not only an infinite of pervasion or extension in which everything forms and happens ; behind that the *vijñānamaya* is always aware of a spaceless infinite, the essential being of Sachchidananda and the highest self of our being. This infinite we may first feel as an infinity above us to which we attempt to rise and an infinity around us into which we strive to dissolve our separate existence ; afterwards we

must rise into it, break out of the ego into its largeness, and then that also can take increasing possession of our lower being until it refashions even our lowest and perversest activities into the truth of the Vijnana.

This is the basis and when it is achieved, then only can we progress to the normality of the supramental ideation ; for that is the play of the supreme light and, though we may receive or reflect it even before we rise into the gnosis, we cannot command or wholly possess it until we become the being of the supreme light, until our consciousness is transformed into that consciousness ; for according to the nature of our consciousness will be the normal strain of our ideation. This ideation of the gnosis has already been described ; but it has to be emphasised that it is not confined to a higher thought or the action of a sort of divine reason. It takes up all our present means of knowledge immensely extended, active and effective where they are now debarred, blind, infructuous, and turns them into a high and intense perceptive activity of the Vijnana. Thus it takes up our sense action and illumines it even in its ordinary field so that we get a true sense of things ; but it also enables the mind-sense to have a direct perception of the inner as well as the outer phenomenon, to feel and receive or perceive, for instance, the thoughts, feelings, sensations, the nervous reactions of the object on which it is turned.\* It uses also the subtle senses as well as the physical and saves them from their errors ; it gives us the knowledge, the experience of planes of existence other than the material to which our ordinary mentality is ignorantly attached and it enlarges the world for us. It transforms similarly the sensations and gives them their full intensity as well as their full holding-power ; for in our normal mentality the full intensity is impos-

---

\* This power, says Patanjali, comes by "*Sanyama*" on an object ; that is for the mentality ; in the gnosis there is no need of *Sanyama* ; it is the natural action of the Vijnana.



sible because the power to hold and sustain vibrations beyond a certain point is denied to it, mind and body would both break under the shock or the prolonged strain. It takes up too the element of knowledge in our feelings and emotions,—for our feelings too contain a power of knowledge and a power of effectuation which we do not recognise and do not properly develop,—and delivers them at the same time from their limitations and from their errors and perversions. For in all things the gnosis is the Truth, the Right, the highest Law, *devānām adabdhāni vratāni*.

Knowledge and Force or Will—for all conscious force is will,—are the twin sides of the action of consciousness. In our mentality they are divided. The idea comes first, the will comes stumbling after it or rebels against it or is used as its imperfect tool with imperfect results; or else the will starts up first with a blind or half-seeing idea in it and works out something in confusion of which we get the right understanding afterwards. There is no oneness, no full understanding between them; or else there is no perfect correspondence of initiation with effectuation. Nor is the individual will in harmony with the universal; it tries to reach beyond it or falls short of it or deviates from and strives against it. It knows not the times and seasons of the Truth, nor its degrees and measures. The Vijnana takes up the will and puts it first into harmony and then into oneness with the truth of the supramental knowledge. In this knowledge the idea in the individual is one with the idea in the universal, because both are brought back to the truth of the supreme knowledge and will. The gnosis takes up not only our intelligent will, but our wishes, desires, even what we call the lower desires, the instincts, the impulses, the reachings out of sense and sensation and it transforms them. They cease to be wishes and desires, because they cease first to be personal and then cease to be that struggling after the

ungrasped which we mean by craving and desire ; they are no longer blind or half-blind reachings out of the instinctive or intelligent mentality, but are transformed into a various action of the Truth-will ; and that will acts with an inherent knowledge of the right measures of its decreed action and therefore with an effectivity unknown to our mental willing. Therefore ~~too~~ in the action of the *vijnānamaya* will there is no place for sin ; for all sin is an error of the will, a desire and act of the Ignorance.

When desire ceases entirely, grief and all inner suffering also cease. The Vijnana takes up not only our parts of knowledge and will, but our parts of affection and delight and changes them into action of the divine Ananda. For if knowledge and force are the twin sides of the action of consciousness, delight, Ananda,---which is something higher than what we call pleasure,---is the stuff of consciousness and the natural result of the interaction of knowledge and will, force and self-awareness. Both pleasure and pain, both joy and grief are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force it applies, between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, other-will. The Vijnana sets this to rights by the power of its truth and a wholesale restoration to oneness and harmony, to the Right and the highest Law. It takes up all our emotions and turns them into various form of love and delight, even our hatreds, repulsions, causes of suffering. It finds out or reveals the meaning they missed and by missing which they became the perversions they are, and it restores our whole nature to the eternal Good. It deals similarly with our perceptions and sensations and reveals all the delight that they seek, but in its truth, not in any perversion and wrong seeking and wrong reception ;

it teaches even our lower impulses to lay hold on the Divine and Infinite in the appearances after which they run. All this is done not in the values of the lower being, but by a lifting up of the mental, vital, material into the inalienable purity as well as the natural intensity, in a word the continual ecstasy, one yet manifold, of the divine Ananda.

Thus the being of Vijnana is in all its activities a play of perfected knowledge-power, will-power, delight-power, raised to a higher than the mental, vital and bodily level, all-pervasive, universalised, freed from egoistic personality and individuality. For it is the play of a higher Self, a higher consciousness and therefore a higher force and higher delight of being, in the purity, in the right, in the truth of the superior or divine being. Its powers may often seem to be what are called in ordinary Yogic parlance siddhis, by the Europeans occult powers, shunned and dreaded by devotees and by many Yogins as snares, stumblingblocks, diversions from the true seeking after the Divine. But that is because they are sought in the lower being, abnormally, by the ego for an egoistic satisfaction. In the Vijnana they are neither occult nor siddhis, but the open, unforced and normal play of its nature. The Vijnana is the power and action of the divine Being in its divine nature, and when this acts through the individual lifted to that plane, it fulfils itself unperverted, without fault or egoistic reaction or diversion from the possession of the Divine. For there the individual is no longer the ego, but the Jiva in the higher divine nature, *parā prakṛitir jīva bhūtā*, the supreme and universal Self seen in the play of multiple individuality but with self-knowledge and in the truth of its divine Shakti.

In the Vijnana the right relation and action of Puruṣa and Prakṛiti are found, because there they become unified and the Divine is no longer veiled. All is his action. The Jiva no longer says "I think, I act, I desire,

I feel", he does not even say like the *sadhaka* striving after unity but before he has reached it, "As appointed by Thee seated in my heart, I act". For the heart, the centre of the mental consciousness is no longer the centre of origination but only a channel ; he is rather aware of the Divine seated above, lord of all, *adhiṣṭhita*, as well as acting within, and seated himself in that higher being, *parārdhe*, *paramasyām parāvati*, he can say truly and boldly, "God himself by his Prakriti knows, acts, loves, takes delight by my apparent individuality and fulfils there in its higher and divine measures the multiple *līla* which the Infinite plays in the universality of its being."

---

# The Eternal Wisdom

---

## BOOK II

### THE DISCOVERY AND REALISATION IN ONESELF OF THE ONE WHO IS IN ALL

#### III

#### THE CONQUEST OF SELF

##### DISINTERESTEDNESS

- 1 Self-interest is the prolongation in us of the animal. Humanity begins in man with disinterestedness.
- 2 Disinterestedness is not always understood. Yet is it the foundation of the virtues, without it they
- 3 could not be practised. — As dawn announces the rising of the sun, so in a man disinterestedness, purity, rectitude forerun the coming of the Eternal.
- 4 Whoever is rich within and embellished with virtue, seeks not outside himself for glory and riches.
- 5-6 —The perfect man does not hunt after wealth.—He must content himself with little and never ask for more than he has.
- 7 The least indigent mortal is the one who desires

---

1) Amiel. —2) Antoine the Healer. —3) Ramakrishna. —  
4) Angelus Silesius. —5) Confucius. —6) Baha-ullah. —  
7) Seneca.

- the least. We have everything we wish when we wish  
 8 only for what is sufficient.—Many things are want-  
 ing to indigence, but everything is wanting to greed.  
 A covetous man is useful to none and still less is he  
 9 of any good to himself,—To covet external objects  
 10 is to defile the mind.—To work only in the material  
 sense is to increase the load that is crushing us.  
 11 We brought nothing into this world and it is certain  
 we can carry nothing out,—and having food and rai-  
 ment let us be therewith content. But they that will  
 be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into  
 many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in  
 destruction and perdition. For the love of money is  
 the root of all evil.

\*  
\*  
\*

- 12 O you who are vain of your mortal possessions,  
 know that wealth is a heavy barrier between the  
 13 seeker and the Desired.—Children of knowledge !  
 the slender eyelash can prevent the eye from seeing ;  
 what then must be the effect of the veil of avarice over  
 the eye of the heart !  
 14 Let your behaviour be without covetousness, and  
 15 be content with such things as you have.—In vain  
 are you rich if you do not quell your passions ; if an  
 insatiable cupidity eats you up, if you are the prey  
 of fears and anxieties, of what use to you is your  
 16 opulence ?.—Mortify therefore covetousness, which  
 17 is idolatry.—Set not thy heart upon riches.—Let  
 your body be pure, pure your words, pure your  
 thoughts. Free yourselves from the preoccupations of  
 daily life ; let not fields, houses, cattle, wealth and  
 worldly goods be your encumbrances. Avoid the

8) id. —9) Chu-King. —10) Antoine the Healer.—11) Timothy  
 VI. 7—10.—12) Bahaullah.—13) id.—14) Hebrews. XIII. 5.—  
 15) Plutarch.—16) Colossians III. 5.—17) Psalms.

anxieties which attend on all things, as one shuns a flaming gulf.

- 19 Labour not for the food which perishes but for  
20 that which endures into everlasting life.—For where  
your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



- 21 O thou who resumest in thyself all creation, cease  
for one moment to be preoccupied with gain and  
22 loss.—Found not thy glory on power and riches.—  
23 Vex not thyself to be rich ; cease from thy own wisdom. Wilt thou set thy eyes upon that which is not ? for riches certainly make themselves wings.  
24 Thou whom all respect, impoverish thyself that  
thou mayst enter the abode of the supreme riches.—  
25 Thou shalt leave behind thee the embarrassments  
with which wealth surrounds thee and thou shalt  
find the immensity of the spiritual kingdom.



- 26 I have never counted as real possessions either  
treasures or palaces or the places which give us credit  
and put authority in our hands or the pleasures  
27 of which men are slaves.—I strive to attain the happiness  
which does not pass away nor perish and which  
has not its source in riches or beauty nor depends  
upon them.  
28 My joy is in labouring to acquire spiritual wealth;  
for the riches of this world pass away, but the treasures  
of our spiritual earnings abide for ever.

---

18) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.—19) John VI. 27.—20) Matthew VI. 21.  
21) Omar Khayyam.—22) Theognis.—23) Proverbs XXIII. 4—5.  
24) Baha-ullah.—25) Ahmed Halif.—26) Cicero.—27) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.—28) id.

# The Psychology of Social Development

---

## XV

We begin to see, through the principle and law of our religious being, through the principle and law of our aesthetic being, the universality of a principle and law which is that of all being and which we must therefore hold steadily in view in regard to all human activities. It rests on a truth on which the sages have always agreed, though by the intellectual thinker it may be constantly disputed. It is the truth that all active being is a seeking for God, a seeking for the hidden Divinity ; the truth which we glimpse through religion, lies concealed behind all life ; it is the great secret of life, that which it is in labour to discover and to make real to its self-knowledge.

This seeking for God is also, subjectively, the seeking for our highest, truest, fullest self. It is the seeking for a Reality which the appearances of life conceal because they only partially express it or because they express it from behind veils and figures, by oppositions and contraries, often by what seem to be perversions and opposites of the Reality itself. It is the seeking for something whose completeness comes only by a sense of the Infinite and Absolute, by finding a value of the infinite in all finite things and by the attempt—necessary, inevitable, however



impossible or paradoxical it may seem to the normal reason,—to raise all relativities to their absolutes and to reconcile their differences, oppositions and contraries by rising to some highest term in which all these are unified. Some perfect highest term there is by which all our imperfect lower terms can be justified and their discords harmonised if once we can reduce to them to be its conscious expressions, to exist not for themselves but for That, as contributory values of that highest Truth, fractional measures of that highest and largest common measure. A One there is in which all the entangled discords of this multiplicity of separated, conflicting, intertwining, colliding ideas, forces, tendencies, instincts, impulses, aspects, appearances which we call life, can find the unity of their diversity, the harmony of their divergences, the justification of their claims, the correction of their aberrations, the solution of their problems and disputes. Knowledge seeks for that in order that Life may know its own true meaning and transform itself into the highest and most harmonious possible expression of a divine Reality. All seeks for that, the infrarational blindly, the rational by following out and gathering together its diversities, analysing in order to synthesise, the suprarational by getting behind them to touch and lay hands on the Reality itself in its core and essence.

This truth comes most early home to us in Religion and in Art, the cult of the spiritual and the cult of the beautiful, because there we get away most thoroughly from the pressure of the outward appearances of life, the urgent siege of its necessities, the deafening clamour of its utilities. There we are not compelled at every turn to make terms with some gross material claim, some vulgar but inevitable necessity of the hour and the moment. We have leisure and breathing-time to seek the Real behind the apparent ; we are allowed to turn our eyes either away from the temporary and transient or through the temporal itself to the eternal ; we can look away from

the limitations of the immediately practical and recreate our souls by the touch of the ideal and the universal. We begin to shake off our chains, to get rid of life in its aspect of a prison-house with Necessity for our jailer and utility for our constant task-master ; we are admitted to the liberties of the soul ; we enter God's infinite kingdom of beauty and delight or we lay hands on the keys of our absolute self-finding and open ourselves to the possession or the adoration of the Eternal. There lies the immense value of Religion, the immense value of Art and Poetry to the human spirit ; it lies in their immediate power for inner truth, for self-enlargement, for liberation.

But in other spheres of life, in the spheres of what by an irony of our ignorance we call especially practical life,—although, if the Divine be our true object of search and realisation, our normal conduct in them and our current idea of them is the very opposite of practical,—we are less ready to recognise the universal truth. We take a long time to admit it even partially in theory, we are seldom ready at all to follow it in practice. And we find this difficulty because there especially, in all our practical life, we are content to be the slaves of an outward Necessity and think ourselves always excused in admitting the yoke of immediate and temporary utilities. Yet even there we must arrive eventually at the highest truth. We shall find out in the end that our daily life and our social existence are not things apart, are not another field of existence with another law than the inner and ideal ; on the contrary, we shall never find out their true meaning or resolve their harsh and often agonising problems until we learn to see in them a means of discovering and expressing individually and collectively our highest and, because our highest, therefore our truest and fullest self. All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity for discovering, realising and expressing the Divine.

It is in our ethical being that this truest truth of

practical life, its real and highest practicality becomes most readily apparent. It is true that the rational man has tried to reduce the ethical life like all the rest to a matter of reason, to determine its nature, its law, its practical action by some principle of reason, by some law of reason. He has never really succeeded and he never can really succeed ; his appearances of success are mere pretences of the intellect making elegant constructions with words and ideas, mere conventions of logic and vamped-up syntheses, in sum pretentious failures which break down at the first strenuous touch of reality. Such is that extraordinary system of utilitarian ethics (which was discovered in the nineteenth century—the great century of science and reason and utility—by one of its most positive and systematic minds and is now so deservedly discredited, with its substitution of a practical, outward and occasional test for the inner, subjective and absolute motive of ethics, with its reduction of ethical action to an impossibly scientific and quite impracticable jugglery of moral mathematics, attractive enough to the reasoning and logical mind, quite false and alien to the whole instinct and intuition of the ethical being. Equally false and impracticable are other attempts of the reason to account for and regulate its principle and phenomena, such as the hedonistic theory which refers all virtue to the pleasure and satisfaction of the mind in good or the sociological which supposes ethics to be no more than a generation from the social sense and social impulses and would regulate its action by that insufficient standard. The ethical being escapes from all these formulas ; it is a law to itself and finds its principle in its own eternal nature which is not in itself a growth of evolving mind, even though it may seem to be that in its earthly history, but a light from the ideal, a reflection in man of the Divine.

Not that all these errors have not each of them a truth behind their false constructions ; for all errors of the

human reason are false constructions, a wrong building upon, effective misconstructions of the truth. Utility is a fundamental principle of existence and all fundamental principles of existence are in the end 'one'; therefore it is true that the highest good is also the highest utility. It is true also that not any balance of the greatest good of the greatest number, but simply the good of others and most widely the good of all is the ideal aim of outgoing ethical practice; it is that which the ethical man would like to effect, if he could only find the way and be always sure what is the real good of all. But this does not help to regulate our ethical practice, nor does it supply us with its inner principle whether of being or of action, but only produces one of the many considerations, by which we may feel our way along the road which is so difficult to travel. Good, not utility must be the principle and standard of good; otherwise we fall into the hands of that dangerous pretender expediency, whose whole method is alien to the ethical. Moreover, the standard of utility, the judgment of utility, its spirit, its form, its application must vary with the individual nature, the habit of mind, the outlook on the world. Here there can be no reliable general law to which all can subscribe, no set of large governing principles such as is supplied to our conduct by true ethics. Nor can ethics at all or ever be a matter of calculation. There is only one safe rule for the ethical man, to stick to his principle of good, his instinct for good, his vision of good, his intuition of good and to govern by that his conduct. He may err, but he will be on his right road in spite of all stumblings, because he will be faithful to the law of his nature. The saying of the Gita is always true; better is the law of one's own nature though ill-performed, dangerous is an alien law however speciously superior it may seem to our reason. But the law of nature of the ethical being is the pursuit of good; it can never be the pursuit of utility.

Neither is it the pursuit of pleasure high or base, nor self-satisfaction of any kind, however subtle or even spiritual. It is true, here too, that the highest good is both in its nature and inner effect the highest bliss. Ananda, delight of being is the spring of all existence and that to which it tends and for which it seeks openly or covertly in all its activities. It is true too that in virtue growing, in good accomplished there is great pleasure and that the seeking for it may well be always there as a sub-conscious motive to the pursuit of virtue. But for practical purposes this is a side aspect of the matter ; it does not constitute pleasure into a test or standard of virtue. On the contrary, virtue comes to the natural man by a struggle with his pleasure-seeking nature and is often a deliberate embracing of pain, an edification of strength by suffering. We do not embrace that pain and struggle for the pleasure of the pain and the pleasure of the struggle ; for that higher strenuous delight, though it is felt by the secret spirit in us, is not usually or not at first conscious in the conscient normal part of our being which is the field of the struggle. The action of the ethical man is not motivated by even an inner pleasure, but by a call of his being, the necessity of an ideal, the figure of an absolute standard, a law of the Divine.

In the outward history of our ascent this does not at first appear clearly or perhaps at all ; there the evolution of man in society may seem to be the determining cause of his ethical evolution. For ethics only begins by the demand upon him of something other than his personal preference, vital pleasure or material self-interest ; and this demand seems at first to work on him through the necessity of his relations with others, by the demands of his social existence. But that this is not the core of the matter, is shown by the fact that the ethical demand does not always square with the social demand, nor the ethical standard always coincide with the social standard. On the

contrary the ethical man is often called upon to reject and do battle with the social demand, to break, move away from, reverse the social standard. His relations with others and his relations with himself are both of them the occasions of his ethical growth, but that which determines his ethical being is his relation with God, the urge of the Divine upon him whether concealed in his nature or conscious in his higher self. He obeys an inner ideal, not an outer standard, a divine law in his being not a social claim or collective necessity.

It has been felt and said from of old that the law of right, the laws of perfect conduct are the laws of the gods, eternal beyond, which man is conscious of and summoned to obey. The age of reason has scouted this summary account of the matter as a superstition or a poetical imagination which the nature and history of the world contradict. But still there is a truth in this ancient superstition or imagination which the rational denial of it misses and the rational confirmations of it, whether Kant's categorical imperative or another, do not altogether restore. If man's conscience is a creation of his evolving nature, if his conceptions of ethical law are mutable and depend on his stage of evolution, yet at the root of them there is something constant in all their mutations which lies at the very roots of his own nature and of world-nature. And if Nature in man and the world is in its beginnings infra-ethical as well as infra-rational, as it is at its summit supra-ethical as well as supra-rational, yet in that infra-ethical there is something which becomes in the human plane of being the ethical, and that supra-ethical is itself a consummation of the ethical and cannot be reached by any who have not trod the long ethical road. Below hides that secret of good in all things which the human being approaches and tries to deliver partially through ethical instinct and ethical idea; above is hidden the eternal good which exceeds our partial and

fragmentary ethical conceptions.

Our ethical impulses and activities begin like all the rest in the infra-rational and take their rise from the sub-conscient. They arise as an instinct of right, an instinct of obedience to an ununderstood law, an instinct of self-giving in labour, an instinct of sacrifice and self-sacrifice, an instinct of love, of self-subordination and of solidarity with others. Man obeys the law at first without inquiring the why and the wherefore, without seeking for it a sanction in the reason. His first thought is that it is a law created by higher powers than himself and his race and he says with the ancient poet that he knows not whence these laws sprang, but only that they are and endure and cannot with impunity be violated. What the instincts and impulses seek after, the reason labours to make us understand, so that the will may come to use the ethical impulses intelligently and turn the instincts into ethical ideas. It corrects the crude and often erring ethical instincts, separates and purifies their confused associations, shows them as best it can their relations, tries to arbitrate and compromise between their conflicting claims, arranges a system and many-sided rule of ethical action. And all this is well, a necessary stage of our advance ; but in the end these very ethical ideas and this intelligent ethical will which it has tried to train to its control, escape from its hold and soar up beyond its province. Always, even when enduring its rein and curb, they have that inborn tendency.

For the ethical being like the rest is a growth and a seeking towards the absolute, the divine which can only be attained securely in the suprarational. It seeks after an absolute purity, an absolute right, an absolute truth, an absolute strength, an absolute love and self-giving, and it is most satisfied when it can get them in absolute measure, without limit, curb or compromise, divinely, infinitely, in a sort of godhead and transfiguration of the ethi-

cal being. The reason is chiefly concerned with what it best understands, the apparent process, the machinery, the outward act, its result and effect, its circumstance, occasion and motive ; by these it judges the morality of the action and the morality of the doer. But the developed ethical being knows instinctively, that it is an inner something which it seeks and the outward act is only a means of bringing out and manifesting within ourselves by its psychological effects that inner absolute and eternal entity ; the value of our actions is not so much in their apparent nature and outward result as in their help towards the growth of the Divine within us. It is difficult, even impossible to justify upon outward grounds the absolute justice, absolute right, absolute purity, love or selflessness of an action or course of action ; for action is always relative, it is mixed and uncertain in its results, perplexed in its occasions. But it is possible to relate the inner being to the eternal and absolute good, to make our sense and will full of it so as to act out of its impulsion or its intuitions and inspirations. That is what the ethical being labours towards and the higher ethical man increasingly attains to in his inner efforts.

In fact ethics is not in its essence a calculation of good and evil in the action or a laboured effort to be blameless according to the standards of the world,—those are only crude appearances,—it is an attempt to grow into the divine nature. Its parts of purity are an aspiration towards the inalienable purity of God's being ; its parts of truth and right are a seeking after conscious unity with the law of the divine knowledge and will ; its parts of sympathy and charity are a movement towards the infinity and universality of the divine love ; its parts of strength and manhood are an edification of the divine strength. That is the heart of its meaning. And its high fulfilment comes when the being of the man undergoes this transfiguration ; then it is not his actions that stand-



ardise his nature but his nature that gives value to his actions ; then he is no longer laboriously virtuous, but naturally divine. Actively, too, he is fulfilled and consummated when he is not led or moved either by the infra-rational impulses or the rational intelligence and will, but inspired and piloted by the divine knowledge and will made conscious in his nature ; and that can only be done, first by communication through the intuitive mind as it purifies itself progressively from the invasion of egoism, self-interest, desire, passion and all kinds of self-will, finally through the supra-rational light and power, no longer communicated but present and in possession of his being. Such was the supreme aim of the ancient sages who had the wisdom which rational man and rational society have rejected because it was too high a truth for the comprehension of the reason and for the powers of the normal limited human will too bold and immense, too infinite an effort.

Therefore it is with the cult of Good, as with the cult of Beauty and the cult of the spiritual. Even in its first instincts it is already an obscure seeking after the divine and absolute; it aims at an absolute satisfaction, it finds its highest light and means in something beyond the reason, it is fulfilled only when it finds God, when it creates in man some image of the divine Reality. Rising from its infra-rational beginnings through its intermediate dependence on the reason to a suprarational consummation, the ethical is like the aesthetic and the religious being of man a seeking after the Eternal.

---

# Hymns of the Atris

---

## THE FIRST HYMN TO THE DAWN

[ The Rishi prays for the full epiphany of the Dawn of the light of Truth in all its lavish splendour, with all the bountiful companies of its gods and seers, the shining herds of its thought, the rushing steeds of its force, the luminous impulsions with which it comes—companioned, as they are, by the burning rays of the Sun of gnosis. Let the Dawn arrive and the work will no longer be long and tardy.]

1 O Dawn, come with all thy splendours of heaven, awaken us today to the great felicity, even as once thou awakenedst us, — *in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*<sup>1</sup>

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

2 Thou who breakest forth into dawning. O daughter of heaven, in him who has the perfect leading of the flaming chariot of light, <sup>2</sup> so break forth today,—*O greater still in thy force, in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*

---

1. The name of the Rishi is here a covert figure for the characteristics of the Sun-birth in man. 2. The same figure, with another name ; it gives the result of the Sun-birth.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

3 Break forth into light a bearer of treasures, O daughter of heaven, as once thou brokest forth,—  
*O greater still in thy force, in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

4 There are bearers of the sacrifice 3 who bring thee out in their speech, by their hymns they manifest thee, O wide and lustrous Dawn; they are glorious with thy plenty, O queen, their gifts are lavish, their boons are full.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

5 When these companies of thy godheads seek to pleasure thee in hope of thy plenitudes, they set their desires all around, they lavish thy undeviating felicity.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

6 These are thy seers; O Dawn, queen of plenty, set in them the splendour of thy heroic powers; lords of thy plenty, they shall lavish on us thy undeviating riches.

O, thy birth is complete! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds!

7 O Dawn, our lady of plenty, bring to them

3. Not human priests, but divine powers, the hosts or companies of the Dawn, "*ganas*," at once priests, seers and patrons of the inner sacrifice, winners and givers of the celestial wealth,

thy illumination, a vast glory ; they shall give us enjoyment of the felicity of thy steeds and the felicity of thy herds.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

8 Bring to us too, O daughter of heaven, powers of impulse full of the troopings of thy light ; let them come companioned with the rays of thy Sun, linked with the purity of his bright and burning light-givings.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of the steeds.

9 Break forth into light, O daughter of heaven ! And spin not out too long the work. For thee thy sun afflicts not with his burning ray as he afflicts the foe and the thief.†

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

10 So much thou shouldst give or more than this ; for to thy adorers thou breakest forth into the full wideness of thy glories and thou art not limited in thy dawning.

O, thy birth is complete ! O, truth is in the tramp of thy steeds !

†. The labour towards the being of the Truth is long and tedious, because the powers of darkness and division, the lower powers of our being, seize on and appropriate, keep idle or misuse the gains of the knowledge. They are not bearers of the sacrifice, but its spoilers ; they are hart by the full ray of the sun. But this Dawn of knowledge can bear the full illumination and bring to a rapid conclusion the great work.

# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## XXVI

In almost all current ideas of the first step towards international organisation it is taken for granted that the nations will continue to enjoy their full separate existence and liberties and will only leave to international action the prevention of war, the regulation of dangerous disputes, the power of settling great international questions which the nations cannot settle by ordinary means. It is impossible, however, that the development should stop there, for this first step would necessarily lead to others which could only travel in one direction. Whatever authority were established, would find itself called upon to act more and more frequently and to assume always increasing powers. To avoid preventible disturbance and friction, to avert hereafter the recurrence of troubles and disasters which in the beginning the first limitations of its powers had debarred the new authority from averting by a timely intervention before they came to a head, to bring about a coordination of activities for common ends, would be the principal motives impelling humanity to advance from a looser to a closer union, from a voluntary self-subordination in great and exceptional matters to an obligatory subordination in all matters, an organised federation or single world-State with the nations for its provinces. The desire of powerful nations to use it for their

own purposes, the utility for weaker nations of appealing to it for the protection of their interests, the shock of actual or threatened internal disturbances and revolutions would all help to give the international authority greater power and provide occasions for extending its normal action. Science, thought and religion, the ~~these~~ great forces which in modern times tend increasingly to override national distinctions and point the race towards unity of life and spirit, would become more impatient of national barriers, hostilities and divisions and lend all their powerful influence to the change. The great approaching struggle between capital and labour, becoming worldwide and arriving at an international organisation, might well be a means of precipitating the inevitable step, might be even the actual crisis which would bring about the transformation.

We are supposing at present that a well-unified world-State would be the final outcome. At first taking up the regulation of international disputes and of economic treaties and relations, the international authority would change from an arbiter and an occasional executive power to a legislative body and a standing executive power. Its legislation would be absolutely necessary in international matters, if fresh convulsions are to be avoided ; for it is idle to suppose that any international arrangement, any ordering of the world arrived at after the close of the present war and upheaval, could be permanent and definitive. Injustice, inequalities, abnormalities, causes of quarrel or dissatisfaction would remain in the relations of nation with nation, continent with continent which would lead to fresh hostilities and explosions. As these are prevented in the nation-State by the legislative authority modifying the system of things in conformity with new ideas, interests, forces, necessities, so it would have to be in the developing world-State. This legislative power, —which, as it developed, extended, regularised itself, be-

came more complex and bound to interfere at many points and override or substitute itself for the separate national action, would imply the growth also of the executive power and an international executive organisation,—might at first confine itself to the most important questions and affairs which obviously demanded its control ; but it would tend increasingly to stretch to all matters which could be viewed as having an international effect and importance, even those in which the nations are now jealous of their own rights and power. And eventually it would invade the whole system of the national life itself and subject it to international control in the interests of the better coordination of the united life, culture, science, organisation, education, efficiency of the human race. It would reduce the now free and separate nations first to the position of the States of the American union or the German empire and eventually perhaps to that of geographical provinces or departments of the single nation of mankind.

The present obstacle to any such extreme consummation is the still strong principle of nationalism, the sense of group separateness, the instinct of separateness, its pride, its pleasure in itself, its various sources of egoistic self-satisfaction, its insistence on the subordination of the human idea to the national idea. But we are supposing that the new-born idea of internationalism will grow apace and subject to itself the past idea and temper of nationalism, that it will become dominant and take possession of the human mind. As the larger nation-group has subordinated to itself and tended to absorb all smaller clan, tribal and regional groups, as the larger empire-group now tends to subordinate to itself and may eventually absorb all smaller nation-groups, so, we are supposing, the complete human group of united mankind will subordinate to itself and eventually absorb all smaller groups of separated humanity. It is only by such a growth of the international

idea, the idea of a single humanity, that nationalism can disappear, since the old natural device of an external unification by conquest seems no longer to be possible, the methods of war having become too disastrous and no single empire having the means and the strength to overcome, whether rapidly or in the gradual Roman way, the rest of the world. Undoubtedly, nationalism is a more powerful obstacle to farther unification than was the separativeness of the old petty and less firmly self-conscious groupings which preceded the developed nation-State. It is still the most powerful sentiment in the collective human mind, still gives an indestructible vitality to the nation and is apt to reappear even where it seemed to have been abolished. But we cannot argue safely from the present balance of tendencies in the beginning of a great era of transitions. Already there are at work not only ideas but forces, all the more powerful for being forces of the future rather than established powers of the present, which may succeed in subordinating nationalism to themselves far earlier than we can at present conceive.

If the principle of the world-State be carried to its logical conclusion and to its extreme consequences, the result will be a process analogous, though with necessary differences, to that by which in the building of the nation State the central government, first as a monarchy, then as a democratic assembly and executive, gathered up into itself the whole administration of the national life. There will be a centralisation of all control, military and police, administrative, judicial, legislative, economical, social, cultural, in the one international authority and as a result of the centralisation a principle of uniformity and a sort of rationalised mechanism of human life and activities throughout the world with justice, universal well-being, economy of effort, scientific efficiency as its principal objects. Instead of the individual activities of nation-groups each working for itself with friction and waste and



conflict, there will be an effort at coordination, such as we now see in a well-organised modern State, of which the complete idea is a throughgoing State socialism, nowhere yet realised indeed, but rapidly coming into being. How and why this development must take place, we can see if we glance briefly at each department of the communal activity.

We have seen already that all military power,—which in a world-State would mean an international armed police,—must be concentrated in the hands of the common authority. A concentration of the final power of decision in economic matters would be also inevitable ; but in the end this supremacy could not stop short of a complete control. For the economic life of the world is becoming more and more one and indivisible and the present state of international relations is an anomalous condition of opposite principles partly in conflict, partly accommodating with each other as best they can. On one side there is the underlying unity which makes each nation commercially dependent on all the rest ; on the other there is the spirit of national jealousy, egoism and sense of separate existence which makes each nation attempt at once to assert its industrial independence and at the same time reach out for a hold of its outgoing commercial activities upon other markets than its own. The interaction of these two principles is regulated at present partly by the permitted working of natural forces, partly by tacit practice and understanding, partly by systems of tariff protection, bounties, State aid of one kind or another on the one hand and commercial treaties and agreements on the other. Inevitably, as the world-State grew, this would be felt to be an anomaly, a wasteful, uneconomical process. The international authority would more and more intervene to modify the free arrangements of nation with nation ; the commercial interests of humanity at large would be given the first place, the indepen-

dent proclivities, commercial ambitions or jealousies of this or that nation would be compelled to subordinate themselves to the human good. The ideal of mutual exploitation would be replaced by the ideal of a fit and proper share in the common economical life of the race. Especially, as socialism advanced and began to regulate the whole economic existence of separate countries, the same principle would gain ground in the international field and in the end the world-State would be called upon to take up into its hands the right ordering of the industrial production and distribution of the world. Each country might be allowed to produce its own absolute necessities,—though in the end it would probably be felt that this was no more necessary than for Wales or Ireland to produce all its own necessities independently of the rest of the British isles or for one province of India to be an economical unit independent of the rest of the country ; but for the most part each would produce and distribute only what it could to the best advantage, most naturally, most efficiently and most economically, for the common need and demand of mankind in which its own would be inseparably included. It would do this according to a system settled by the common will of mankind through its State government and under a method made uniform in its principles, however variable in local detail, so as to secure the simplest, smoothest and most rational working of a necessarily complicated machinery.

The administration of the general order of society is a less pressing matter of concern than it was to the nation-States in their period of formation, because those were times when the element of order had almost to be created and violence, crime and revolt were both more easy and more a natural propensity of mankind. At the present day not only are societies tolerably well organised in this respect and equipped with the absolutely necessary agreements between country and country, but by an elaborate

system of national, regional and municipal government the State can regulate parts of the order of life with which the cruder governments of old were quite unable to deal effectively. In the world-State, it may be thought, each country may be left to its own free action in matters of its internal order, and indeed of all its separate political, social and cultural life. But even here it is probable that the world-State would demand a greater centralisation and uniformity.

In the matter, for instance, of the continual struggle of society with the still ineradicable element of crime which it generates in its own bosom, the crudity of the present system is sure to be recognised and a serious attempt made to deal with it radically. The first necessity would then be the close observation and supervision of the great mass of constantly recreated corrupt human material in which the bacillus of crime finds its natural breeding-ground. This is at present done very crudely and imperfectly, for the most part after the event of actual crime, by the police of each nation for itself with extradition treaties and informal mutual aid as a device against evasion by displacement. The world-State would insist on an international as well as a local supervision, not only to deal with the phenomenon of what may be called international crime and disorder which is likely to increase largely under future conditions, but for the more important object of the prevention of crime.

For the second necessity it would feel, would be to deal with crime at its roots and in its inception. It may attempt this first by a more enlightened method of education and moral and temperamental training which would render the growth of criminal propensities more difficult; secondly, by scientific or eugenic methods of observation, treatment, isolation, perhaps sterilisation of corrupt human material; thirdly, by a humane and enlightened gaol system and penological method having for

its aim not the punishment but the reform of the incipient and the formed criminal. It would insist on a certain uniformity of principle so that there might not be countries persevering in backward and old-world or inferior or erratic systems and so defeating the general object. For this end centralisation of control would be necessary. So too with the judicial method. The present system is still vaunted of as enlightened and civilised—it is so perhaps comparatively,—but a time will surely come when it will be considered grotesque, inefficient, irrational and in many of its principal features semi-barbaric, a half-conversion at most of the more confused and arbitrary methods of an earlier state of society. With the development of a more rational system the preservation of the old juridical and judicial principles and methods in any part of the world would be felt to be intolerable and the world-State would be led to standardise the new principles and the new methods by a common legislation and probably a general centralised control.

In all these matters, it might be said, uniformity and centralisation would be beneficial and probably necessary and therefore no jealousy of national separateness and independence might be allowed under such conditions to interfere with the common good of humanity; but at least in the choice of their political system and in other spheres of their social life the nations might well be left to follow their own ideals and propensities, to be healthily and naturally free. It may even be said that the nations would never tolerate any serious interference in these matters and that the attempt to use the World-State for such a purpose would be fatal to its existence. But as a matter of fact the principle of political non-interference is likely to be much less admitted in the future than it has been in the past or is at present. Always in times of great and passionate struggle between conflicting political ideas,—between oligarchy and democracy in ancient Greece,

between the old regime and the ideas of the French revolution in modern Europe,—the principle of political non-interference has gone to the wall. But now we see another phenomenon—the opposite principle of interference slowly erecting itself into a conscious rule of international life. America showed the way by its intervention in Cuba and in Mexico, not on grounds of national interest, but on behalf of liberty, constitutionalism and democracy, on international grounds therefore and practically in the force of this idea that the internal arrangements of a country concern under certain conditions of disorder or insufficiency not only itself, but its neighbours and humanity at large. A similar principle was proposed by the Allies in Greece, and now we see it applied to one of the most powerful nations of the world in the refusal of the Allies to treat with Germany or, practically, to readmit it into the comity of nations unless it sets aside its existing political system and principles and adopts the forms of modern democracy.

This idea of the common interest of the race in the internal affairs of a nation is bound to increase as the life of humanity becomes more unified. The great political question of the future is likely to be that of Socialism. Supposing socialism to triumph in the leading nations of the world, it will inevitably seek to impose itself everywhere not only by indirect pressure, but even by direct interference in what it would consider backward countries. An international authority, Parliamentary or other, in which it commanded the majority or the chief influence, would be too ready a means to be neglected. Moreover a world-State would probably no more find it possible to tolerate the continuance of certain nations as capitalist societies, itself being socialistic in major part, than a socialist Great Britain would tolerate a capitalist Scotland or Wales. Supposing on the other hand all nations to become socialistic in form, it would be natural enough

for the world-State to coordinate all these socialisms into one great system of united human life. But Socialism means the destruction of the distinction between political and social activities ; it means the socialisation of the common life and its subjection in all its parts to organised government and administration. Nothing small or great escapes its purview. Birth and marriage, labour and amusement and rest, education, culture, training of physique and character, the socialistic sense leaves nothing outside its scope. Therefore, granting an international socialism, neither the politics nor the social life of the peoples is likely to escape the centralised control of the world-State.

Such a world-system is remote indeed from our present conceptions and established habits of life, but these conceptions and habits are already being subjected at their roots to powerful forces of change. Uniformity too is becoming more and more the law of the world ; it is becoming more and more difficult, in spite of sentiment and in spite of conscious efforts of conservation and revival, for local individualities to survive. But the triumph of uniformity would naturally make for centralisation, the radical incentive to separateness being removed, just as centralisation once accomplished would make for uniformity. Such decentralisation as might be called for in a uniform humanity would be needed for convenience of administration, not on the ground of separative variations. Once the national sentiment goes under before a dominant internationalism, large questions of culture and race would be the only grounds left for the preservation of a strong though subordinate principle of separation in the world-State. But difference of culture is quite as much threatened today as any other more outward principle of group variation. The differences between the European nations are simply minor variations of a common occidental culture and with science, that great power for uniformity of thought and life and method, becoming more

and more the greater part and threatening to become the whole of culture and life, the importance of these variations is likely to decrease. The only radical difference is between the occident and the orient; but with Asia undergoing the shock of Europeanism and Europe feeling the reflux of Asiaticism the most probable outcome is a common world-culture. The valid objection to centralisation will then be greatly diminished in force, if not entirely removed. Race-sense is perhaps a stronger obstacle because it is more irrational; but this too may be removed by the closer intellectual, cultural and physical intercourse which is inevitable in the not distant future.

The dream of the cosmopolitan socialist thinker may therefore be realised; given the powerful continuance of the present trend of world-forces, it is even inevitable. Even what seems now most a chimera, a common language, may become a reality. For a State naturally tends to establish one language as the instrument of all its public affairs, its thought, its literature, while the rest sink into patois, dialects, provincial tongues, like Welsh in Great Britain or Breton and Provençal in France; exceptions like Switzerland are few, hardly more than one or two in number, and preserved by unusually favourable conditions. It is difficult indeed to suppose that languages with powerful literatures spoken by millions of cultured men will allow themselves to be put into a quite secondary position, much less snuffed out by any old or new speech of man; but it cannot be certainly said that scientific reason taking possession of the mind of the race and thrusting aside separative sentiment as a barbaric anachronism may not accomplish even this psychological miracle. In any case variety of language need be no insuperable obstacle to uniformity of culture, uniformity of education, life, organisation or a regulating scientific machinery applied to all departments of life and settled for the common good by the united will and intelligence of the human race. For that would be what a world-State such as we have imagined, would stand for, its meaning, its justification, its human object. Nothing else indeed would necessitate or could justify its creation.

---

# आयं

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th November 1917

### CONTENTS

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Ch. XXXVIII. The Ascent and its Downward Eye	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXVI. Gnosis and Ananda	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Divine Birth and Divine Works (2)	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
The Conquest of Self— To Renounce Coveting	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT XVI	
HYMNS OF THE ATRIS.....	A. G.
The Second Hymn to the Dawn	
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXVII	
About Astrology	





# The Life Divine

---

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE ASCENT AND ITS DOWNWARD EYE

The evolution of the human race only assumes its true place and just meaning and is only intelligible whether in its principle or the great lines of its plan, if we regard it, not in itself, but in its relation to the universe. But the universe is, we have seen, only the universal mind and life-force determined in the forms of material substance and determining them according to the laws fixed by the divine supermind, gnosis or self-knowledge and all-knowledge. Therefore we must regard our race-life as part of one line—the line with which we here upon earth are concerned—of the evolutionary self-manifestation of the Spirit or universal being in a material universe. And that line must reproduce in itself the general principle and evolving plan of being itself, whatever may be its own special and subordinate principle. For nothing here exists in itself and by itself, but only by its meaning first to the universal and then to its own and the universe's supreme Reality.

Now, the self-manifestation of the Spirit in a material universe means an involution of consciousness and force in the form and activity of material substance and its awakening and ascent,—evolution, as we have now agreed to call it,—from principle to principle, from gra-

de to grade. Each series of grades of consciousness is determined by the fact of consciousness being more or less involved, quite involved in inconscient matter, hesitating on the verge between involution and conscious evolution in the first or non-animal forms of life in matter, consciously evolving in mind housed in a living body, to be fully evolved by the awakening of the supermind in the embodied mental being. To each series of grades belongs its appropriate class of existences,—material forms and forces, vegetable lives, animals and half-animal man, divine beings ; but there is no rigid line between them except such as has got settled by the fixed habit of Nature. Consciousness passes from one series of grades to another, whether by imperceptible process, by some bound or crisis or by an intervention from above,—let us say, some descent or ensouling or influence from higher worlds. But the main point is that, by whatever means, the consciousness of Spirit in matter is able to ascend from the lower to the higher gradations. Thus, having laid down a basis of material being, material forms, forces, existences in which it seems to be lying inconscient or, in reality, as we now know, always working subconsciently, it is still able to manifest life, to manifest mind and mental beings in a material world and must therefore be able to manifest there supermind also and supramental beings. This is the general principle of the evolution.

To our eyes the leap from one series to the other seems immense ; the crossing of the gulf whether by bridge or by leap seems to be impossible, nor can we discover any satisfactory evidence of its accomplishment or of the manner in which it was accomplished. Even in the outward evolution, even in the development of physical forms, the missing link remains always missing ; but in the evolution of consciousness the passage is still more difficult to account for, for it seems more like a

transformation than a passage. Partly, this may be due to insufficient observation of the minute gradations not only in each series itself, but on the borders between series and series; the scientist who observes them minutely, is therefore ready to believe in the possibility. But still there is a real, a radical difference, so much so that the passage from one to another seems a miracle of transformation rather than a natural transition.

This appears the more as we rise higher in the scale. Life in the metal has been shown to be identical with life in the plant in its essence and what might be called the psychological difference,—for there is one,—might seem, though great, to be principally a matter of degree. Between the highest vegetable and the lowest animal the gulf is visibly greater; for in the one *chitta*, stuff of mental consciousness, is unawakened though in its own way intensely, amazingly active, in the other, though less intense in that way and in its own new way imperfectly determined, it is still awakened; the transition has been made. Between the highest animal and the lowest man there is a still wider gulf to be crossed, the gulf between sense-mind and the intellect; for harp on the animal nature of the savage, as we will, we cannot alter the fact that the savage has above and beyond the sense-mind which we share with the animals, a human intellect and is capable—in whatever limits—of reflection, ideas, conscious invention, religious and moral thoughts, everything of which man as a race is capable, and differs only in its past instruction and the degree of its intensity and activity. Yet we can no longer suppose that God or some demiurge has manufactured each genus and species ready made in body and in consciousness and left the matter there, having looked upon his work and seen that it was good. We are driven to suppose that Nature has effected the transition by swift or slow degrees and, having made it, did not care to preserve as distinct forms what were

only stepping-stones,—the animal vegetable or vegetable animal, the animal man or humanised animal. But this, after all, is little more than a hypothesis.

Let us, however, look, not at the scientific or physical aspect, but purely at the psychological side of the question and see precisely in what the difference lies. In the first place, it consists, as we see, in the rise of consciousness to another principle of being. The metal is fixed in the principle of matter ; we know now that it has movements of life in it, but still it is not characteristically a form of life ; it is characteristically a form of matter. The plant is fixed in the principle of life,—not that it is not subject to matter or devoid of mind, for it has at least a nervous psychology, reactions of pleasure and pain ; but still it is a form of life, not of mere matter nor is it, so far as we know, a mentally conscious being. Man and the animal are both mentally conscious beings, but the animal is fixed in mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations, while man has received into his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the supermind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense-mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source ; for it is agnostic like the sense-mind in which and for which it works, not gnostic, it seeks to lay hold on knowledge, but does not hold knowledge in itself. In other words, in each of these forms of existence the universal being has fixed its action of consciousness in a different principle or, as between man and animal, in the modification of a lower by a higher though now degraded principle ; that makes, not all the difference, but the radical inner difference between being and being.

We must observe that this fixing successively in higher and higher principles does not carry with it the abandonment of the lower grades, any more than the dwelling in the lower grades means the absence of the higher

principles. Life, mind, supermind are present in the atom, are at work there, but subconsciously ; that is to say, there is an informing Spirit, but the outer force of conscious being, what we might call the formal or form consciousness as distinguished from the immanent or governing consciousness, is lost in the physical action, is so absorbed into it as to be fixed in a stereotyped self-oblivion unaware of what it is and what it is doing. The atom is a sort of eternal somnambulist, an outer or form consciousness asleep and driven by an inner existence,—he who is awake in the sleeper, as the Upanishad puts it,—an outer consciousness which, unlike that of the human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not always, or ever, on the point of waking. In the plant the outer consciousness is still in the state of sleep, but of a sleep full of nervous dreams, always on the point of waking, but never awaking. Life has appeared ; in other words, force of conscious being has been so much intensified, has raised itself to such a height of power as to develop or become capable of a new principle of action, that which we see as vitality. It has become nervously aware of existence, though not mentally aware, and has put forth a new grade of activities of a higher and subtler value than the physical. At the same time it is capable of receiving and turning into these new values life contacts and physical contacts from other forms than its own which the forms of matter cannot deal with, cannot turn into any kind of value, partly because their own receiving power is not sufficiently subtle and intense, partly because the contacts themselves are too subtle. The plant does not reject the physical, it takes it up and gives it new values.

So in the animal being mind and sense appear, that which we call conscious life. That is to say, force of conscious being is so much intensified, rises to such a height as to develop a new principle of being,—apparently new

at least in the world of matter,—mentality. It is mentally aware of existence, its own and others, puts forth a higher and subtler grade of activities, receives a wider range of contacts, mental, vital, physical, from forms other than its own, takes up the physical and vital existence and turns all it can get from them consciously into sense values and mind values. It senses body, it senses life, but it senses also mind; it has not only nervous reactions, but conscious sensations, impulses, volitions, emotions, mental associations, the stuff of feeling and thought and will.

When we come to man, the whole thing becomes conscious and begins to reveal to itself its own nature. The higher animal is not the somnambulist,—as lower animal forms still mainly are,—but it has only a limited waking mind; in man the conscious being enlarges its wakefulness and though not at first fully self-conscious, can, it seems, open to its own integral being. As in the two lower ascents, there is a heightening of the force of conscious being to a new power and a new range of subtle activities, those of intelligent mind. As in them, so here, there is also a widening of his range of consciousness; he is able to take in more of the world and of himself as well as to give it higher values of conscious experience. So too, there is the third constant element of the ascension, the taking up of the lower grades and giving to them intelligent values. Man has not only the sense of his body and life, but the intelligent sense and idea of it. He takes up too the mental life of the animal, as well as the physical and bodily; but he gives them higher values; he has the intelligent sense and the idea of his sensations, emotions, volitions, impulses, mental associations, and what was crude stuff of thought and feeling and will, capable only of gross determinations, he turns into the finished work and artistry of these things. For the animal too thinks, but in a mechanical series of me-

mories and mental associations ; it has the crude stuff of reason, but not the formed ideative and reflective faculty. The waking consciousness in the animal is the unskilled artisan of mind, in man it is the skilled craftsman and can become—but this he does not attempt sufficiently,—not only the artist, but master and adept.

But here we have to observe two particularities of this human and at present highest development, which take us to the heart of the matter. First, this taking up of the lower parts of life reveals itself as a turning downward of the master eye of the Spirit or universal being from the height to which he has reached, a gazing down with the double or twin power of his being, consciousness and force, knowledge and will, so as to understand this lower life and its possibilities and to raise it also up to a higher level, to give it higher values, to bring out of it higher possibilities. And this he evidently does because he does not intend to kill or destroy it, but, delight of existence being his eternal business and a harmony of various strains, not a sweet but monotonous melody the method of his music, he wishes to include them also and get more delight out of them. Still it is always on condition of their admitting the higher values and, until they do consent, he deals harshly enough with them even to trampling them under foot when he is bent on perfection and they are rebellious. And that is the true aim of ethics, discipline and askesis, to lesson and tame, purify and prepare to be fit instruments the vital and physical and lower mental life so that they may be transformed into notes of the higher mental and eventually the supramental, but not to mutilate and destroy them. This downward eye of knowledge and will with a view to an all-round heightening is his way from the beginning. The plant takes, as we may say, a nervous view of its whole physical existence so as to get out of it all the vital intensity possible,—note its intense nervous excitement and pains and pleasures, vitally



much greater than the animal mind and body will tolerate. The animal takes a mentalised sense-view of its vital and physical existence so as to get out of it all the sense value possible, much acuter than man's as mere sensation or sense-emotion. Man, looking downward from the plane of will and intelligence, abandons these lower intensities, but in order to get out of them a higher intensity in other values, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, spiritual or at the least mentally dynamic or, as he calls it, practical. This he does even on his normal levels.

But, secondly, man not only turns his gaze downward and around him, when he has reached a higher level, but upward. In him not only the downward gaze of Sachchidananda has become conscious, but the conscious upward gaze also develops. The animal is satisfied with what Nature has done for him; if there is any upward gaze of the secret spirit within him he has nothing consciously to do with it, that is still Nature's business: it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously his business. That is because by his possession of intelligent will, deformed ray of the gnosis though it be, he begins to put on the double nature of Sachchidananda; he is no longer, like the animal, an undeveloped conscious being driven by Prakriti, a slave of the executive Force, played with by the Nature-Soul, but a developing conscious soul or Purusha interfering with what was her sole business, wishing to have a say in it and eventually to be the master. He cannot do it yet, he is too much in her meshes; but he knows that the Spirit within him wishes to rise to yet higher heights, to widen its bounds and that it is not the business of the conscious Nature in him, the Purusha-Prakriti, to be satisfied with his present lowness and limitations. To climb to higher altitudes, to get a greater scope, to transform his lower nature, is not this always the natural impulse of man as soon as he has made his place for himself in the physical and vital world

of earth and has a little leisure to consider his further possibilities ? It must be so not because of any false and pitiful imaginative illusion in him, but, first, because he is the imperfect, yet developing mental being ; secondly, because he is capable, unlike other terrestrial creatures, of becoming aware of what is above the mind, of supermind, of spirit, opening to it, admitting it, rising towards it, taking hold of it. We have therefore every reason to say that it is in his human nature, in all human nature, to exceed itself by conscious evolution, to climb beyond what he is. Not individuals only, but the race can hope to rise beyond the imperfections of our present very undivine nature and to ascend at least to a superior humanity, if not absolutely to a divine manhood.

But where is the limit ? Certainly, in mind itself there are grades of the series and each grade again is a series in itself, successive elevations which we may conveniently call planes and sub-planes of the mental consciousness and the mental being. At present we normally take our stand on the lowest sub-plane of the intelligence, which we may call the physical, because it depends on the physical brain, the physical senses, the physical sense-mind. All the rest, all that is not sense-experience, it builds either out of or upon the physical sense-mentality and even then regards these higher contents as imaginations and thought abstractions, not as realities ; or at any rate even when we receive them as realities, we do not feel them concretely and substantially in their own proper substance, subtler than the physical substance and its grosser concreteness. But above there is what we may call an intelligence of the life-mind nervous and psychic which does so concretely sense and contact the things of the life-world and the unseen dynamic forces and realities of the material universe, does not need the evidence of the physical senses, is not limited by them. There our life and the life of the world become real to us independent of

the body and of the symbols of the physical world which alone now we call natural phenomena, as if Nature had no greater phenomena and no greater realities than these ! Yet above is a mind of pure intelligence which senses directly all the things of the mind-world and the intelligence and ideative activities of beings in the material world which at present we can only infer and cannot experience directly. There mind and soul independent of the body become to us an entire reality, and we can consciously live in them much more than in the body. Finally, yet above are a plane of intuitive mind dense with light derived direct from the gnosis and a plane of pure spiritual mind in which we are in direct contact with the infinite, in perfect touch with the self and highest reality of things, Sachchidananda.

It is clear that if we can raise ourselves to live on these levels, not merely receive influences descending from them, which is all we normally do, there could be that heightening of our force of conscious being so as to create a new principle of consciousness, a new range of activities, new values for all things, that widening of our consciousness and life, that taking up and transformation of the lower grades of our existence, by which the Soul in Nature creates a higher type of being in the evolution. Each step would mean a more divine being, a more divine force and consciousness, knowledge and will, sense of existence and delight in existence, in short an initial unfolding towards the divine life. All religion, all philosophy, all Yoga, all psychic experience and discipline are signposts and directions pointing us upon that road. But the human race is still weighted by a certain gravitation towards the physical, the pull of our yet unconquered earth-matter ; it is dominated by the brain-mind, the physical intelligence, and it hesitates before the indication or falls back before the effort. It has too as yet a great capacity for sceptical folly, an immense indolence, an enormous intellectual

---

and spiritual timidity and conservatism when called out of the grooves of habit, and even the constant evidence of life itself that where it chooses to conquer, it can conquer,—witness the miracles of that quite inferior power, physical science,—does not prevent it from doubting or repelling a new call and leaving the response to a few individuals. But that will not do ; for it is only when the race advances that the victories of the Spirit can be secure. For then, even if there is a fall, a certain atavistic force in the race will call it upward again and the next ascent will be both easier and more lasting because of the past endeavour ; for that and its result remain stored in the subconscious mind of humanity. Who can say what victories of the kind may have been achieved in our past cycles and how easy comparatively may be the next ascension ?

---

# **The Synthesis of Yoga**

---

## **CHAPTER XXXVI**

### **GNOSIS AND ANANDA.**

The ascent to the gnosis and the possession of the gnostic consciousness raise both the soul of man and his life in the world to a glory of light and power and bliss and infinity which seems in comparison with the lame action and limited realisations of the mental being the very status and dynamis of an absolute perfection. And it is perfection, which nothing before it has been,—for even the highest spiritual realisation on the plane of mentality has in it something top-heavy, one-sided and exclusive, and the widest is marred by its imperfect power of self-expression in life,—but in comparison with what is beyond it, it is only a relative perfection. Or, it is the last step from which we can securely ascend into the absolute infinities which are the origin and the goal of the incarnating spirit.

For the Upanishad tells us that after the knowledge-self is possessed and all the lower selves have been drawn up into it, the last step of all—though one might ask, is it eternally the last or only the last practically conceivable or at all necessary for us now?—is to take up that also into the Bliss-Self and there complete the spiritual ascension. Ananda, the Bliss, is the essential nature of the spi-

rit ; there it finds its true self, its essential consciousness, the absolute power of its being. Therefore the soul's entry into the absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite perfection and the infinite liberation. This bliss can be enjoyed indeed even on the lower planes where the Purusha plays with his modified and qualified Nature, on the plane of matter, on the plane of life, on the plane of mind as well as on or above the gnostic truth-plane of knowledge. For each of these principles contains in itself the whole potentiality of all the other six notes of our being and each plane of Nature can have its own perfection of these notes under its own conditions. Even the physical soul in man, the *annamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda either by a reflection of the Soul in physical Nature, its bliss, power and infinity, or by losing itself in the Self within : the result is either a glorified sleep of the physical mind in which the physical being forgets itself or else moves about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature, *jadavat*, like a leaf in the wind, or otherwise a state of pure and free irresponsibility of action, *bālavat*, a divine childhood. But this comes without the higher glories of knowledge and delight which belong to the same status upon a more exalted level ; it is an inert realisation of Sachchidananda in which there is no mastery of the Prakriti by the Purusha. So too the life soul in man, *prāṇamaya purusha*, can reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul in universal Life or by losing itself in the Self within. Here again the result is either a state of sheer self-oblivion or else an action driven irresponsibly by the life nature, the great world-energy in its vitalistic dance, so that the outer being acts either in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world, *unmattavat*, or with an entire disregard of the conventions and proprieties of fitting human action, *pisācharat*,—the divine maniac or

else the divine demoniac. Here too there is no mastery of nature, but only a joyful static possession by the Self within and an unregulated dynamic possession by the physical or the vital Nature without.

So too again the mind-soul in man, *manomaya puruṣa*, reflects and enters into the self of Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul as it mirrors itself in the nature of pure universal mind or by absorption in the Self within. Here there is either the cessation of mind and action or a desire-free unbound action, that of the soul alone in the world and careless of all human ties, the eremite soul, or that of the soul which lives in relations of pure love and ecstasy with all, the saint-soul. The mental being may, however, realise the Self in all three planes together, and then he is all these things at once or alternately or successively ; or he may transform the lower forms into manifestations of the higher state, the childlikeness, the inert irresponsibility, the divine madness and carelessness of all rules and proprieties of the ecstatic saint or the wandering eremite. Here too there is no mastery of its world-Nature by the soul, but a double possession, by the freedom and delight of the infinite soul within and without by the happy, natural and unregulated play of the mind-Nature. But since the mental being is capable of receiving the gnosis in a way in which the life soul and physical soul cannot receive it, with knowledge though only the limited knowledge of a mental response, he may to a certain extent govern by it his outer action. But the mind can arrive only at a compromise between the infinite within and the finite nature without ; it cannot pour the infinity of its inner being, power and bliss with any sense of fullness into its always inadequate external action : still it is content and free because it is the Lord within who takes up the responsibility of the action, the guidance and the consequence.

The gnostic soul, the *vijñānamaya puruṣa*, has the

fullness, the sense of plenitude of the Godhead in its action, the free, splendid and royal march of the Infinite transforming all life into a symbol of the eternal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Wine of the nectar,—knowledge, power, bliss. It possesses the infinite of the Self and the infinite of Nature. It does not so much lose as find its nature self in the Self of being ; for while the other planes of the mental being are those of man finding God in himself and himself in God, the gnosis is rather God self-possessed in the human symbol. Therefore the gnostic soul does not so much reflect as identify itself with and possess the Soul in the truth-Nature. In the gnosis the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti as two separate powers complementary to each other,—the great truth of the Sankhya philosophy which is also the practical truth of our present natural being,—disappears in their biune entity. The Truth-being realises the Hara-Gauri \* of the Indian symbolistic iconology. The truth-soul does not arrive at self-oblivion in the Infinite, but at eternal self-possession in the Infinite. Its action is not irregular, but a perfect self-control in an infinite freedom. For in the lower planes the soul is naturally subject to Nature and the regulating principle is found in the lower nature, so that all regulation depends on the acceptance of a strict subjection to the law of the finite. If the soul there simply withdraws into the infinite, it loses its natural centre from which all its external being was till then regulated and finds no other ; the Nature dances in the gusts and falls of the universal energy, acting on the individual system rather than in that system, or strays in the wild steps of an irresponsible ecstasy. If on the other hand it moves towards the discovery of a divine centre of control through which the Infinite can consciously govern its action in the

\* The biune body of the Lord and his Spouse, Ishwara and Shakti, the right half male, the left half female.



individual, it is moving towards the gnosis where that centre preexists. It is when it arrives in the gnosis that the Purusha becomes the master of the Nature, because force or will there is the exact counterpart, the perfect dynamis of the divine knowledge, and that knowledge is not merely the eye of the Witness but the immanent gaze of the Ishwara dwelling as the governing power, a power not to be hedged in or denied, in every impulsion and every action.

The gnosis does not indeed reject the realisation on the lower planes, but it possesses them under its own conditions. The gnostic soul is the child, but the king-child ; † for here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys are the worlds and all universal Nature the garden of the playing. It takes up the condition of divine inertia, not that of the subject soul driven by Nature as the breath of the Lord, but of the Nature-Soul driven by the bliss of the mastering Purusha, so that in its biune being of Purusha-Prakriti it is as if a flaming Sun and body of divine Light self-carried in its orbit by its own inner consciousness and power at one with the universal. Its madness is the ecstasy of a supreme consciousness and power vibrating with an infinite sense of freedom and intensity in its divine life-movements, its action supra-rational and therefore to the rational mind, which has not the key, a colossal madness ; but yet this madness is the very method of the Lord of the worlds which no intellectual interpretation can fathom,—a dance this also, a whirl of mighty energies, but with the Master of the dance holding the hands of His energies and keeping them to the circles of his Rasa-lila. Nor is the gnostic soul bound any more than the divine demoniac by conventions and proprieties of the normal human life, the rules through which it makes some shift to accommodate itself with the dualities of the lower nature, guide itself among its contra-

† So Hermelitus, " The kingdom is of the child."

dictions, avoid its stumblingblocks, foot with gingerly care around its pitfalls. Its life is abnormal, free to all the hardships of a soul dealing fearlessly and even violently with Nature, but yet is all governed by the law of the Truth, by the law therefore of the self-possessed Knowledge, Love, Delight, Unity. It seems abnormal only because its rhythm is not measurable by the faltering beats of the mind.

If it is so, what then is the necessity of a still higher step and what difference is there between the soul in gnosis and the soul in the Bliss? None essentially, but still a difference, almost a reversal in position. On all planes the Ananda can be found, because everywhere it exists and is the same; but when found in the lower planes, it is by a sort of dissolution into it of the pure mind or the life-sense or the physical consciousness; and it is, as it were, itself diluted by the dissolved form and held in the dilution. The gnosis has on the contrary a dense light of essential consciousness \* in which the fullness of the Ananda can be possessed. When its form is dissolved into the Ananda itself, it undergoes a change by which the soul is carried up into its last and absolute freedom; for it casts itself into the absolute being of the spirit and its entirely self-existent bliss. The gnosis has that indeed as the conscious source of all its activities, possesses it as the base of its being, but in its action it stands forth from it as its operation, the rhythmical working of its activities. Gnosis is the divine Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force, Prakriti-Purusha, full of the delight of the divine being; but in the Ananda the knowledge goes back into pure self-consciousness, the will dissolves into pure transcendent force, both are taken up into pure delight of being. What was the basis of the gnostic being, is the self-field of the Ananda.

This takes place because there is here completed the transition to the absolute unity of which the gnosis is the decisive step, but not the final resting-place. In the gnosis the soul is aware of its infinity and lives in it, yet it lives also in a working centre for the individual play of the Infinite. It realises its unity with all beings, but it keeps a distinction without difference by which it can have also the contact with them,—that distinction for the joy of contact which in the mind becomes not only difference, but in its self-experience division from our other selves, in its spiritual being a loss of self one with us in others and a reaching after that, in life a compromise between egoistic self-absorption and a blind seeking out for the lost unity. Even in its infinite consciousness, the gnostic soul creates a sort of voluntary limitation; it has even its particular luminous aura of being, though beyond that it identifies itself with all being. But in the Ananda all is reversed. The centre disappears; in the bliss nature there is no centre, nor any voluntary or imposed circumference, but all is one equal being. The bliss soul finds and feels itself everywhere; it has no mansion, is *aniketa*, or has the all for its mansion, or, if it likes, it has all things for its many mansions. All other selves are entirely its own selves, in action as well as in being; the joy of contact in oneness becomes altogether the joy of absolute identity. Existence is no longer formulated in the terms of the Knowledge, because the known and knowledge and the knower are wholly one self and there is no need of what we call knowledge. All the consciousness is of bliss of being, all power is the power of bliss, all forms and activities are forms and activities of bliss. In this absolute truth of its being the soul lives, here deformed by contrary phenomena, there brought back and transfigured into their reality.

The soul lives, it is not abolished. For on every plane of our being the same principle holds; the soul

may fall asleep in a trance of self-absorption, may live in the highest glory of its own plane,—for the Ananda it is the Anandaloka, Brahmaloaka, Vaikuntha, Goloka of various Indian systems,—or may turn upon the lower worlds to fill them with its own light and power. The Divine on the Ananda plane is not incapable of the world-play or self-debarred from it. On the contrary, as the Upanishad insists, the Ananda is the true creative principle; from this divine Bliss all takes birth,\* in it all is preexistent as absolute truth of being which the Vijnāna brings out and subjects to voluntary limitation by the Idea and the law of the Idea. But in the Ananda all law ceases and there is an absolute freedom. It is above all principles and the enjoyer of all principles in one and the same motion, above all gunas and the enjoyer of infinite gunas, above all forms and the enjoyer of all forms. That is what the spirit transcendent and universal is, and to be one in bliss with the transcendent and universal spirit is for the soul to be that and nothing less. Necessarily, since there is here the absolute and the play of absolutes, it is ineffable by any of the conceptions of our mind or signs of the phenomenal or ideal realities of which mind-conceptions are the figures in our intelligence; for these realities are themselves only relative symbols of those absolutes. The symbol may give an idea of the thing itself, but when we get beyond to the thing which it symbolises, we transcend ideas and transcend even the ideal realities.

Our first absorbing impulse when we become aware of something entirely beyond what we are and know and are powerfully attracted by it, is to get away from the present actuality into that higher reality. The extreme form of this attraction is the condemnation of the lower as an illusion and the aspiration to *lava* or *nirvāna* in the be-

---

\* Therefore the world of the Ananda is called the Janaloka, in the double sense of birth and delight.

yond,—the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction. But the real *laya* or *mrvāna* is the release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger being of the higher reality. We find in the end that not only is the higher reality the cause of all the rest, but that it embraces and exists in all the rests ; only, by possessing it, all is transformed in our soul-experience into the superior value. Finally, we get to the absolute and its supreme values which are the absolutes of all. We then lose the passion for release, *mumukshutva*, which till then actuated us, because we have got to that which is ever free and is neither attracted into attachment by what binds us now nor afraid of what to us seems to be bondage. Without the loss of this passion there is no absolute liberation. The Divine attracts the souls by various lures which are all of them its relative conceptions of bliss ; all are the soul's way of seeking for the Ananda. First it is the lure of an earthly reward of material, intellectual, ethical or other joy in the terrestrial mind and body ; secondly, there is the hope of a heavenly bliss, much greater than these earthly rewards, but the conception of heaven rises in altitude and purity till it reaches the pure idea of the eternal presence of God or delightful union with Him ; thirdly, we get the subtlest of all lures, escape from worldly or heavenly joys and sorrows and from all phenomenal things, a Nirvana, a self-dissolution in the Absolute, the Ananda of cessation and peace. But in the end all these toys of the mind have to be transcended, the fear of birth and the desire of escape from birth have entirely to fall away from us. For, as the Upanishad declares, the soul realising oneness has no sorrow or shrinking and the soul realising the bliss of the Brahman, has nothing to fear from anything whatsoever. Fear and desire and sorrow are diseases of the mind born of its sense of division and limitation. But the Ananda is free from all these maladies.

The bliss soul is not bound by birth or by non-

birth, by desire of the Knowledge or fear of the Ignorance. It has already had and transcended the Knowledge ; it can play with the Ignorance without being imbued with it ; it can descend into birth without being chained to the revolutions of the wheel of Nature. It knows besides the purpose and law of the birth-series. That law is for the soul to rise from plane to plane and substitute always the rule of the higher for the rule of the lower play even down to the material field. The bliss-soul does not disdain either to help that ascent from above or to descend down the stairs of God into the material birth and there contribute the power of its own bliss nature to the upward pull of the divine forces. Man, generally, cannot indeed ascend yet to the bliss nature ; he has still to secure himself on the higher mental altitudes, to ascend from them to the gnosis ; but he can receive its power into his soul in greater or less degree. In that lie his highest capacities.

And what would be the bliss nature in man ? First, to be one with all beings in bliss of being ; and since love is the human symbol of bliss-unity, to approach this oneness by the way of universal love, a human love at first, a divine love afterwards. Secondly, to be one in bliss with all the world-play and banish from the soul the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of the darkened mental being. Thirdly, to get that power of the bliss-freedom in which all the conflicting principles of our being shall be unified in their absolute values ; so that all evil shall perforce become good, the universal beauty of the All-beautiful take possession, every darkness be converted into a pregnant glory of the light and the discords which the mind creates between Truth and Good and Beauty, Power and Love and Knowledge disappear on their eternal summit of unity.

The Purusha in mind, life and body is divided from Nature and subject to her dualities ; in the gnosis he is

biune with her and finds as master their reconciliation and harmony by their essential unity ; in the Ananda he is one with the Prakriti and no longer only biune with her. There is no longer the play of Nature with the soul ; but all is the play of the soul with itself in its own nature of bliss. This is the supreme mystery, the highest secret, simple to itself, however difficult and complex to our mental conceptions. It is the free infinity of the self-delight of Sachchidananda. The play of the divine child, the *râs lîla* of the Lover are its mystic soul-symbols.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

(2)

We see that the mystery of the divine Incarnation in man, the assumption by the Godhead of the human type and the human nature, is in the view of the Gita only the other side of the eternal mystery of human birth itself which is always in its essence, though not in its phenomenal appearance, even such a miraculous assumption. The eternal and universal self of every human being is God ; even his personal self is a part of the Godhead, *mamai-vāṅsha*,—not a fraction or fragment, surely, since we cannot think of God as broken up into little pieces, but a partial consciousness of the one Consciousness, a partial Power of the one Power, a partial enjoyment of world-being by the one and universal Delight of being, and therefore in manifestation or, as we say, in Nature a limited and finite being of the one infinite and illimitable being. The stamp of that limitation is an ignorance by which he forgets, not only the Godhead from which he came forth, but the Godhead which is always within him, there living in the secret heart of his own nature, burning like a veiled Fire on the inner altar in his own temple-house of human consciousness.

He is ignorant because there is upon the eyes of his soul and all its organs the seal of that Nature, *Prakriti*,



Maya, by which he has been put forth into manifestation out of God's eternal being ; she has minted him like a coin out of the precious metal of the divine substance, but overlaid with a strong coating of the alloy of her phenomenal qualities, stamped with her own stamp and mark of animal humanity, and although the secret sign of the Godhead is there, it is at first indistinguishable and always with difficulty decipherable, not to be really discovered except by that initiation into the mystery of our own being which distinguishes a Godward from an earthward humanity. In the Avatar, the divinely-born Man, the real substance shines through the coating ; the mark of the seal is there only for form, the vision is that of the secret Godhead, the power of the life is that of the secret Godhead, and it breaks through the seals of the assumed human nature ; the sign of the Godhead, an inner soul-sign, not outward, not physical, stands out legible for all to read who care to see or who can see ; for the Asuric nature is always blind to these things, it sees the body and not the soul, the external being and not the internal, the mask and not the Person. In the ordinary human birth the Nature-aspect of the universal Divine assuming humanity prevails ; in the incarnation the God-aspect of the same phenomenon takes its place. In the one he allows the human nature to take possession of his partial being and to dominate it ; in the other he takes possession of his partial type of being and its nature and divinely dominates it. Not by evolution or ascent like the ordinary man, the Gita seems to tell us, not by a growing into the divine birth, but by a direct descent into the stuff of humanity and a taking up of its moulds.

It is to assist that ascent or evolution that he descends ; that the Gita makes very clear. It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the

influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth-nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself. It is to give a dharma, a religion—not a mere creed, but a method of inner and outer living,—a way, a rule and law of self-moulding by which he can grow towards divinity. It is too, since this growth, this ascent is no mere isolated and individual phenomenon, but like all in the divine world-activities a collective business, a work and the work for the race, to assist the human march, to hold it together in its great crises, to break the forces of the downward gravitation when they grow too insistent, to uphold or restore the great dharma of the Godward law in man's nature, to prepare even, however far off, the kingdom of God, the victory of the seekers of light and perfection, *sâdhûnam*, and the overthrow of those who fight for the continuance of the evil and the darkness. All these are recognised objects of the descent of the Avatar, and it is usually by his work that the mass of men seek to distinguish him and for that that they are ready to worship him. It is only the spiritual who see that this external Avatarhood is a sign, in the symbol of a human life, of the eternal inner Godhead making himself manifest in the field of their own human mentality and corporeality so that they can grow into unity with that and be possessed by it. The divine manifestation of a Christ, Krishna, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within in our own inner humanity. That which has been done in the outer human life of earth, may be repeated in the inner life of all human beings. \*

This is the object of the incarnation, but what is the method ? • First, we have the rational or minimising view of Avatarhood which sees in it only an extraordinary manifestation of the diviner qualities moral, intellectual

and dynamic by which average humanity is exceeded. In this idea there is a certain truth. The Avatar is at the same time the Vibhûti. This Krishna who in his divine inner being is the Godhead in a human form, is in his outer human being the leader of his age, the great man of the Vrishnis. This is from the point of view of the Nature, not of the soul. The Divine manifests himself through infinite qualities of his nature and the intensity of the manifestation is measured by their power and their achievement. The *vibhûti* of the Divine is therefore, impersonally, the manifest power of his quality, it is his out-flowing, in whatever form, of Knowledge, Energy, Love, Strength and the rest ; personally, it is the form or the animate being in whom this power is achieved and does its great works. A preeminence in this inner and outer achievement, a greater power of divine quality, an effective energy is always the sign. The human *vibhûti* is the hero of the race's struggle towards divine achievement, the hero in the Carlylean sense of heroism, a power of God in man. "I am Vasudeva (Krishna) among the Vrishnis," says the Lord in the Gita, "Dhananjaya (Arjuna) among the Pandavas, Vyasa among the sages, the seer-poet Ushanas among the seer-poets," the first in each category, the greatest of each group, the most powerfully representative of the qualities and works in which its characteristic soul-power manifests itself. This heightening of the powers of the being is a very necessary step in the progress of the divine manifestation. Every great man who rises above our average level, raises by that very fact our common humanity ; he is a living assurance of our divine possibilities, a promise of the Godhead, a glow of the divine Light and a breath of the divine Power.

It is this truth which lies behind the natural human tendency to the deification of great minds and heroic characters ; it comes out clearly enough in the Indian habit of mind which easily sees a partial (*anusha*) Avatar

in great saints, teachers, founders, or most significantly in the belief of southern Vaishnavas that some of their saints were incarnations of the symbolic living weapons of Vishnu,—for that is what all great spirits are, living powers and weapons of the Divine in the upward march and battle. This idea is innate and inevitable in any mystic or spiritual view of life which does not draw an inexorable line between the being and nature of the Divine and our human being and nature ; it is the sense of the divine in humanity. But still the Vibhuti is not the Avatar ; otherwise Arjuna, Vyasa, Ushanas would be Avatars as well as Krishna, even if in a less degree of the power of Avatarhood. The divine quality is not enough ; there must be the inner consciousness of the Lord and Self governing the human nature by his divine presence. The heightening of the power of the qualities is part of the becoming, *bhūtagrāma*, an ascent in the ordinary manifestation ; in the Avatar there is the special manifestation, the divine birth from above, the eternal and universal Godhead descended into a form of individual humanity, *ātmanam srijāmi*, and conscious not only behind the veil but in the outward nature.

There is an intermediary idea, a more mystical view of Avatarhood which supposes that a human soul calls down this descent into himself and is either possessed by the divine consciousness or becomes an effective reflection or channel of it. This view rests upon certain truths of spiritual experience. The divine birth in man, his ascent, is itself a growing of the human into the divine consciousness, and in its intensest culmination is a losing of the separate self in that. The soul merges its individuality in an infinite and universal being or loses it in the heights of a transcendent being ; it becomes one with the Self, the Brahman, the Divine or, as it is sometimes more absolutely put, becomes the one Self, the Brahman, the Divine. The Gita itself speaks of the soul becoming

the Brahman, *brahmabhūta*, and of its thereby dwelling in the Lord, in Krishna, but it does not, it must be marked, speak of it as becoming the Lord or the Purushottama, though it does declare that the Jiva himself is always Ishwara, the partial being of the Lord, *mamairēn-shah*. For this greater union, this highest becoming is still part of the ascent; while it is the divine birth to which every Jiva arrives, it is not the descent of the Godhead, not Avatarhood, but at most Buddhahood according to the doctrine of the Buddhists, it is the soul awakened from its present mundane individuality into an infinite superconsciousness. That need not carry with it either the inner consciousness or the characteristic action of the Avatar.

On the other hand, this entering into the divine consciousness may be attended by a reflex action of the Divine entering or coming forward into the human parts of our being, pouring himself into the nature, the activity, the mentality, the corporeality even of the man; and that may well be at least a partial Avatarhood. The Lord stands in the heart, says the Gita,—by which it means of course the heart of the subtle being, the nodus of the emotions, sensations, mental consciousness, where the individual Purusha also is seated;—but he stands there veiled, enveloped by his Maya. But above, on a plane within us but now superconscient to us, called heaven by the ancient mystics, the Lord and the Jiva stand together revealed as of one essence of being, the Father and the Son of certain symbolism, the Divine Being and the divine Man who comes forth from Him born of the higher divine Nature, \* the virgin Mother, *parāprakriti*, *parā Māyā*, into the lower or human nature. This seems to be

\* In the Buddhist legend the name of the mother of Buddha makes the symbolism clear: in the Christian the symbol seems to have been attached by a familiar mythopoeic process to the actual human mother of Jesus of Nazareth.

the inner doctrine of the Christian incarnation ; in its Trinity the Father is above in this inner Heaven ; the Son or supreme Prakriti become Jiva of the Gita descends as the divine Man upon earth, in the mortal body; the Holy Spirit, pure Self, Brahmic consciousness is that which makes them one and that also in which they communicate ; for we hear of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus and it is the same descent which brings down the powers of the higher consciousness into the simple humanity of the Apostles.

But on the other hand the higher divine consciousness of the Purushottama may itself descend into the humanity and that of the Jiva disappear into it. This is said by his contemporaries of the occasional transfiguration of Chaitanya when he who in his normal consciousness was only the lover and devotee of the Lord and rejected all deification, became in these abnormal moments the Lord himself and so spoke and acted, with all the outflowing light and love and power of the divine Presence. Supposing this to be the normal condition, the human receptacle to be constantly no more than a vessel of this divine Presence and divine Consciousness, we should have the Avatar according to this intermediary idea of the incarnation. That easily recommends itself as possible to our human notions ; for if the human being can elevate himself so as to feel an unity with the being of the Divine and a mere channel of its consciousness, light, power, love, his own will and personality lost in that will and that being,—and this is a recognised spiritual status,—then there is no inherent impossibility of the reflex action of that Will, Being, Power, Love, Light, Consciousness occupying the whole personality of the human Jiva. And this would not be merely an ascent of our humanity into the divine birth and the divine nature, but a descent of the divine Purusha into humanity, an Avatar.

The Gita, however, goes much farther. It speaks

clearly of the Lord himself being born ; Krishna speaks of his many births that are past and makes it clear by his language that it is not merely the receptive human being but the Divine of whom he makes this affirmation, because he uses the very language of the Creator, the same language which he will employ when he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, *I* create (loose forth) my *self* by my *Maya*," presiding over the actions of my *Prakriti*. Here there is no question of the Lord and the human *Jiva* or of the Father and the Son, the divine *Man*, but only of the Lord and his *Prakriti*. The Divine descends by his own *Prakriti* into birth in its human form and type bringing into it the divine Consciousness and the divine Power, though consenting, though willing to act in the form, type, mould of humanity, and he governs its actions in the body as the indwelling and over-dwelling Soul, *adhi-shthāya*. From above he governs always, for so he governs all nature, the human included ; from within also he governs all nature, but hidden, and the difference here is that he is manifest : the nature is conscious of the divine Presence as the lord, the inhabitant, and it is not by his secret will from above, "the will of the Father which is in heaven," but by his quite direct and apparent will that he moves the nature. And here there seems to be no room for the human intermediary ; for it is by resort to his own nature, *prakṛitīṃ scām*, and not that of the *Jiva* that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth.

This doctrine is obviously a hard thing for the human reason to accept ; and for obvious reasons. First, the Avatar is always a dual phenomenon of divinity and humanity ; the Divine takes upon himself the human nature with all its outward limitations and makes them the circumstances, means, instruments of the divine consciousness and the divine power, a vessel of the divine

birth and the divine works. Otherwise the object of the Avatar's descent is not fulfilled ; for that object is precisely to show that the human birth with all its limitations can be made such a means and instrument of the divine birth and divine works, precisely to show that the human type of consciousness can be compatible with the divine essence of consciousness made manifest, can be converted into its vessel, drawn into nearer conformity with it by a change of its mould and a heightening of its powers of light and love and strength and purity ; and to show also how it can be done. If the Avatar were to act in an entirely supernormal fashion, this object would not be fulfilled. A merely supernormal or miraculous Avatar would be a meaningless absurdity ; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ's so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature ; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of humanity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption,—as did Christ,—secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine Soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature,—as did Buddha. The rationalist who would have cried to Christ, " If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross," or points out sagely that the Avatar was not divine because he died and died too by disease,—as a dog dieth,—knows not what he is saying : for he has missed the root of the whole matter. Even, the Avatar of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the Avatar of divine joy ; the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome ; and the way



and the extent of the overcoming, whether internal only or external also, depends upon the stage of the human advance ; it must not be done by a non-human miracle.

The question then arises, how is this human mind and body assumed ? For they were not created suddenly and all of a piece, but by some kind of evolution, physical or spiritual or both. No doubt, the descent of the Avatar, like the divine birth from the other side, is essentially a spiritual phenomenon, as is shown by the Gita's *âtmanam srijâmi*, it is a soul-birth ; but still there is here an attendant physical birth. How then were this human mind and body of the Avatar created? If we suppose that the body is created by hereditary evolution, by inconscient Nature and its immanent Life-spirit without the intervention of the individual soul, the matter becomes simple. A physical and mental body is prepared fit for the divine incarnation by a pure or great heredity and the descending Godhead takes possession of it. But the Gita in this very passage applies the doctrine of reincarnation, boldly enough, to the Avatar himself, and in the usual theory of reincarnation the re-incarnating soul by its past spiritual and psychological evolution itself determines and in a way prepares its own mental and physical body. The soul prepares its own body, the body is not prepared for it without any reference to the soul. Are we then to suppose an eternal Avatar himself evolving his own fit mental and physical body according to the needs and pace of the human evolution and so appearing from age to age, *yuge yuge* ? In some such spirit some would interpret the ten incarnations of Vishnu, first in animal forms, then in the animal man, then in the dwarf man-soul, Vamana, the violent Asuric man, Rama of the axe, the divinely-natured man, Rama, the awakened spiritual man, Buddha, finally the complete divine manhood, Krishna,—for the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Krishna began, fulfilling in power the great struggle which the ninth Avatar prepared

in all its potentialities. It is a tremendous assumption to our modern mentality, but the language of the Gita seems to demand it. Or since the Gita does not expressly solve the problem, we may solve it in some other way of our own, as that the body is prepared by the Jiva but assumed from birth by the godhead or that it is prepared by one of the four Manus, *chaturdro manavah*, of the Gita, the spiritual Fathers of every human mind and body. This is going far into the mystic field from which the modern reason is still averse ; but once we admit Avatarhood, we have already entered into it and, once entered, may as well tread in it with firm footsteps.

There the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood stands. We have had to advert to it at length in this aspect of its method, as we did to the question of its possibility, because it is necessary to look at it and face the difficulties which the reasoning mind of man is likely to offer to it. It is true that the physical Avatarhood does not fill a large place in the Gita, but still it does occupy a definite place in the chain of its teachings and is implied in the whole scheme, the very framework being the Avatar leading the *vibhūti*, the man who has risen to the greatest heights of mere manhood, to the divine birth and divine works. No doubt, too, the inner descent of the Godhead to raise the human soul into himself is the main thing,—it is the inner Christ, Krishna or Buddha that matters. But just as the outer life is of immense importance for the inner development, so the external Avatarhood is of no mean importance for this great spiritual manifestation. The consummation in the physical symbol assists the growth of the inner reality ; afterwards the inner reality expresses itself with greater power in a more perfect symbolisation of itself in the outer life. Between these two acting and reaching upon each other the manifestation of the Divine in humanity has elected to move in the cycles of its consummation.

# The Eternal Wisdom

---

## BOOK II

### III

#### THE CONQUEST OF SELF

##### TO RENOUNCE COVETING.

- 1-2 There is no fire that can equal desire.—Coveting is without end, but contentment is a supreme felicity ; therefore the wise recognise no treasures upon the earth except contentment alone.
- 3 The world is carried away in the torrent of desire, in its eddies there is no soil of safety. Wisdom alone is a solid raft and meditation a firm foothold.
- 4 From coveting is born grief, from coveting is born fear. To be free utterly from desire is to know neither fear nor sorrow.
- 5 When a man shakes from him the clinging yoke of desire, affliction drops away from him little by little as drops of water glide from a lotus-leaf.—1,
- 6 such as I am, belong not to myself...A man should think thus, "All earth is mine," or thus, "All this

---

1) Dhammapada.— 2) Mahabharata.— 3) Fo-shu-hing tsun king.— 4) Dhammapada.— 5) id.— 6) Mahabharata.

belongs to others just as well as to myself;" such a man is never afflicted.

- 7 Let him repulse lust and coveting, the disciple who  
8 would lead a holy life.—If a man covets nothing,  
how shall he fail to do what is just and good ?  
9 The body may be covered with jewels and yet the  
heart may have mastered all its covetings.
-

# The Psychology of Social Development

---

## XVI

In all the higher powers of his life man may be said to be seeking, blindly enough, for God ; to get at the divine and eternal in himself and the world and to harmonise them, to put his being and his life in tune with the Infinite reveals itself as his aim and his destiny. He sets out to arrive at his highest self and his largest and most perfect self, and the moment he at all touches upon it, this self in him appears to be one with some great self of Truth and of Good and Beauty in the world to which we give the name of God. To get at this as a spiritual presence is the aim of religion, to grow into harmony with its eternal nature of right, love, strength and purity is the aim of ethics, to enjoy and mould ourselves into the harmony of its eternal beauty and delight is the aim and consummation of our aesthetic being, to know and to live according to its eternal principles of truth is the end of science and philosophy.

• But all this seems to be something above our normal and ordinary being ; it is something into which we strive to grow, but it does not seem to be the normal stuff, the natural being of the daily life of the individual and the society. That life is practical and not idealistic ; it is

concerned not with good, beauty, spiritual experience, the higher truth, but with interests, physical needs, desires, vital necessities. This is real to it, all the rest is a little shadowy ; this belongs to its ordinary labour, all the rest to its leisure ; this to the stuff of which it is made, all the rest to its parts of ornament and dispensable improvement. To all that rest society gives a place, but its heart is not there. It accepts ethics as a bond and an influence, but it does not live for ethical good, its real gods are vital need and utility ; it governs partly its life by ethical laws because otherwise vital utility in seeking its own satisfaction through many egoistic individuals would clash with and destroy itself, but it does not try to make its life entirely ethical. It concerns itself still less with beauty, only indeed as an embellishment and an amusement, a satisfaction and pastime of the eye and ear and mind ; it does not try to make its life a thing of beauty. It allows religion its fixed place and portion, on holy days and in the church or temple, at the end of life when age and the approach of death call the attention forcibly away from this life to other life, at fixed times in the week or the day when it thinks it right for a moment to pause in the affairs of the world and remember God ; but to make the whole of life a religion, a remembering of God and seeking after him, is a thing that is not really done even in societies which like the Indian boast that this is their aim and principle. It admits philosophy in a still more remote fashion ; and if nowadays it eagerly seeks after science, it does that because science helps prodigiously the satisfaction of its vital desires, needs and interests ; it does not seek after an entirely scientific life any more than after an entirely ethical life. A more complete effort in any of these directions it leaves to the individual, to the few, and to individuals of a special type, the saint, the ethical man, the artist, the thinker, the man of religion ; it gives them a place, does some

homage to them, but for itself it is content to seek after its own inherent principle of vital satisfaction, vital necessity and utility, vital efficiency.

The reason is that here we get to another power of our being which is different from the ethical, aesthetic, rational and religious ; one which, even if we recognize it as lower in the scale, still insists on its reality and has not only the right to exist but the right to satisfy itself and be fulfilled : it is indeed the primary power, it is the base of our existence upon earth, it is that which the others take as their starting-point and their foundation. This is the life-power in us, the vitalistic, the dynamic being. Its whole principle and aim is to be, to assert our existence, to increase, to expand, to possess, and to enjoy. Its primary terms are being and power : Life itself is being trying to express itself in terms of force, and human life is therefore the human being trying to impress himself on the world with the greatest possible force and intensity and extension. First, to live merely and make for himself a place in the world, for himself and his species, secondly, having made it to possess, produce and enjoy with an ever-widening scope, finally, to spread himself over all the earth-life and dominate it, this is and must be his first practical business. It is what the Darwinians have tried to express by their notion of the struggle for life ; but the struggle is not merely to last and live, but to increase, enjoy and possess ; and it becomes in its method not only a principle and instinct of egoism, but a principle of association. It has two instincts, one of individualistic self-assertion, the other of collective self-assertion ; it works by strife, but also by mutual assistance and united effort ; it uses two forms of action, therefore, which seem to be contradictory but are in fact coexistent, competitive endeavour and cooperative endeavour. From this dynamism of life the whole structure of human society has come into being and upon the sustained and vigorous action of

this dynamism the continuance, vigour and growth of all human societies depends. If this life-force in them fails, all begins to languish, stagnate and finally move towards disintegration.

The European idea of society is founded upon the primary and predominant part played by this vital dynamism in the formation and maintenance of society ; for the European, ever since the Teutonic mind and temperament took possession of western Europe, has been fundamentally the practical, dynamic and kinetic man, vitalistic in the very marrow of his thought and being. The rest has been the fine flower of his life and culture, this has been its root and stalk ; and in modern times this truth of his temperament has come to the surface and triumphed over the traditions of Christian piety and Latinistic culture in the great economic and political civilisation of the nineteenth century. Life and society consist, for the practical human instincts, in three activities, the domestic and social life of man,—social in the sense of his customary relations with others in the community both as an individual and as a member of one family among many,—his economical activities as a producer, wealth-getter and consumer, his political status and action. Society is the organisation of these three things and, fundamentally, for the practical human being it is nothing more. Learning and science, ethics, aesthetics, religion are assigned their place in it as aids to life, for its guidance and betterment, for its embellishment, for the consolation of its labours, difficulties and sorrows.

The ancients held a different, indeed a diametrically opposite view ; they recognised the importance of the primary activities, in Asia the social most, in Europe the political,—as every society must which at all means to live and flourish,—but they were not to them primary in the higher sense of the word ; they were man's first business, but not his chief business. The ancients regarded this life



as an occasion for the development of the rational, the ethical, the aesthetic, the religious being. Greece and Rome laid stress on the three first, Asia went farther and made these also subordinate, looked upon them as stepping-stones to a religious consummation. Greece and Rome were proudest of their art, poetry, philosophy, even more than of their political liberty or greatness, Asia of these three and of her social organisation, but much more of her saints, religious thinkers and spiritual men ; the modern world is proud of its economical organisation, of its political liberty, order and progress, of the mechanism, comfort and ease of its social and domestic life and of its science, but of science in its application to practical life, its railways, telegraphs, steamships and the other thousand and one discoveries and inventions which help it to master the physical world. That marks the whole difference in the attitude.

On this a great deal hangs ; for if the practical and vitalistic view of life and society is the right one, if society merely exists for the maintenance, comfort, vital happiness and efficiency of the species, then our idea that life is a seeking for God and for the-highest self and that society must also make that its principle, cannot stand. Modern society, at any rate in its self-conscious aim, is anything but that, whatever may be the splendour of its achievement ; it acknowledges only two gods, life and practical reason organised under the name of science. Therefore on this great primary principle we must look with especial care to see what it is in its appearance and its reality. Its appearance is familiar enough ; for it is the very stuff and form of our everyday life. Its ideals are first the physical good and vitalistic well-being of the individual, satisfaction of his desire for bodily health, long life, comfort, luxury, wealth, amusement, recreation, the expenditure of his dynamic force in remunerative work and production and, as the higher flame-spires of this energy, crea-

tions and conquests of various kinds, war, travel, adventure, colonisation. Usually all this takes as its cadre the family, the society, the nation ; but still in its primary impulse it is individualistic and makes family, social and national life a means for the greater satisfaction of the individual.

• In the family he seeks for the satisfaction of his vital instinct of possession, as well as for the joy of companionship, and his other vital instinct of self-reproduction ; possession of wife, servants, house, wealth, estates ; the reproduction of himself and the prolongation of his activities, gains and possessions in his children ; incidentally the vital pleasures and the pleasures of emotion and affection to which the domestic life gives scope. In society he looks about for a larger expansion of himself and his instincts ; a wider field of companionship, associated effort and production, errant or gregarious pleasure, satisfied emotion, stirred sensation and regular amusement are the advantages which attach him to social existence. In the nation he finds a means for the play of a still larger sense of power and expansion ; where he can, fame, preeminence, leadership, the sense of an effective action on a small or a large scale, in a small or a large field of activity ; where he cannot have this, still a share of some kind in the pride, power and splendour of a great collective activity and vital expansion. In all this there is primarily at work the individualist principle of the vital instinct in which the competitive side of the instinct associates with the cooperative but predominates over it. Carried to an excess it becomes the ideal of the arrivist, to whom family, society and nation are not so much a sympathetic field as a ladder to be climbed, a prey to be devoured, a thing to be conquered and dominated. In extreme cases it reverts to a primitive anti-social feeling and creates the nomad, the adventurer, the ranger of wilds, or the pure solitary,—solitary not from any intellectual or spi-

ritual impulse, but because society, once an instrument, has become a prison and a burden, an oppressive cramping of his expansion, a denial of breathing-space and elbow-room. But these cases grow rarer, now that the ubiquitous tentacles of modern society take hold everywhere; soon there will be no place of refuge left for either the nomad or the solitary, not even perhaps the Sahara desert or the Himalayas. Even perhaps the refuge of seclusion may be taken from us by a collectivist society bent upon making its pragmatic, economic, dynamic most of every individual "cell" of its organisation.

For this growing collectivist or cooperative tendency is the second instinct of the vital or practical being in man. It shows itself first in the family ideal by which the individual first subordinates himself and finds his vital satisfaction and practical account, not in his own predominant individuality, but in the life of a larger vital ego. This ideal played a large part in the old aristocratic views of life, especially in the ancient Indian idea of the *kula* and the *kuladharma*, and in later India it was at the root of the joint-family system, which was the economic base of mediæval Hinduism. Its grossest Vaishya form has been the ideal of the British domestic Philistine, the idea of man born here to follow a trade or profession, marry, procreate a family, earn his living, succeed reasonably or else make as much wealth as possible, enjoy for a space and then die, having done his whole business and essential duty in life,—this apparently being the end for which man with all his divine possibilities was born! But in whatever form, however this grossness may be refined or toned down, whatever ethical or religious conceptions may be superadded, always the family is essentially practical, vitalistic and economic in its whole being. In its natural form it is simply the larger vital ego and vital organism which takes up the individual and assumes his place as the competitive unit, while it accepts and uses

society for its field and means of continuance, vital satisfaction, well-being, aggrandisement and enjoyment. But this unit also can be induced by the cooperative instinct in life to subordinate itself to the society, which is again a still larger vital ego taking up both the individual and the family and using them for the collective satisfaction of its vital needs, claims, interests, aggrandisement, well-being, enjoyment. The individual and family consent for the same reason that induced the individual to take on himself the yoke of the family, because they find their account in this larger vital life and have the instinct in it of their own larger growth and satisfaction. The society is, still more than the family, essentially *économique* in its aims, and this is evident in the predominantly economic character of modern ideas of Socialism which are the full flowering of this instinct of collective life. But since it also is one competitive unit among many of its kind, and since its relations with them are mainly hostile, competitive and not cooperative, the political character is necessarily added and we have the nation or State. It is perfectly natural therefore that the development of the collective and cooperative idea of society should culminate at first in a huge, often a monstrous overgrowth of the vitalistic, economical and political ideal of life, society and civilisation.

What account are the higher parts of man's being which more openly tend to the growth of his divine nature, to make with this vital instinct or with its gigantic modern developments? Obviously, their first impulse must be to take hold of and dominate them; but when they find that here is a power apart, as persistent as themselves, seeking a satisfaction *per se*, accepting their impress to a certain extent, but not altogether and, as it were, unwillingly, partially, unsatisfactorily,—what then? We often find that ethics and religion especially, when they find themselves in a constant conflict with the vital

instincts, the dynamic life-power in man, proceed to an attitude of almost complete hostility and seek to damn them in idea and repress them in fact. To the vital instinct for wealth and well-being they oppose the ideal of a chill and austere poverty ; to the vital instinct for pleasure the ideal not only of self-denial, but of absolute mortification ; to the vital instinct for health and ease the contempt, disgust and neglect of the body ; to the vital instinct for incessant action and creation the ideal of calm and inaction, passivity, contemplation ; to the vital instinct for power, expansion and conquest the ideal of humility, self-abasement, submission, meek harmlessness, docility in suffering ; to the vital instinct of sex on which depends the continuance of the species, the ideal of an unrepudative chastity and celibacy ; to the social and family instinct the anti-social ideal of the ascetic, the monk, the solitary, the world-shunning saint. From discipline and subordination they proceed to mortification, which means when translated the putting to death of the vital instincts, and declare that life itself is an illusion to be escaped from or a kingdom of the flesh, the world and the devil,—accepting thus the claim of the unenlightened and undisciplined life itself that it is not and is never meant to be the kingdom of God.

Up to a certain point this recoil has its uses and may easily, by *tapasya*, by the law of energy increasing through compression, develop for a time a new vigour in the life of the society. But beyond a certain point it tends, not to kill, for that is impossible, but to discourage and render inert, feeble, narrow along with the vital instincts the indispensable life-energy of which they are the play. No society wholly dominated by this denial of the life dynamism can flourish and put forth its possibilities of growth and perfection. From dynamic it becomes static and from the static position it proceeds to stagnation and degeneration. Even the higher being of man, which

finds its account in a vigorous life dynamism, both as a fund of force to be transmuted into its own higher energies and as a connection with the outer life, suffers in the end by this failure and contraction. The ancient Indian ideal recognised this truth and divided life into four essential and indispensable divisions, *artha*, *kâma*, *dharma*, *moksha*, vital interests, satisfaction of desires of all kinds, ethics and religion, and liberation or spirituality, and it insisted on the practice and development of all. Still it tended not only to put the last forward as the goal of all the rest, which it is, but to put it at the end of life and its habitat in another world of our being, rather than here in life itself. But this rules out the idea of the kingdom of God on earth and the perfectibility of society and of man in society, without which no universal ideal can be complete. It provides a temporary and occasional, but not an inherent justification for human life and the collective being of the race.

Let us then look at this vital instinct and life dynamism in its own being and not merely as an occasion for ethical or religious development and see whether it is really rebellious in its very nature to the Divine. We can see at once that what we have described is the first stage of the vital being, the infra-rational, the instinctive, when it is developing itself and being trained by the growing application to it of the enlightening reason. It is full of often hideous uglinesses and brute blunders and jarring discords, but so also is the infra-rational stage in ethics, in aesthetics, in religion even. It is true too that it presents a much more enormous difficulty than these others, more resists elevation, because it is almost the very province of the infra-rational, nearest to it at any rate in the scale of being. But still it has too, properly looked at, its rich elements of power, beauty, nobility, good, sacrifice, worship, divinity; here too are high-reaching gods, masked but still resplendent. Until recently, and even now, rea-

son, in the garb no longer of philosophy, but of science, has increasingly proposed to take up all this physical and vital life and perfect it by the sole power of rationalism, by a knowledge of the laws of Nature, of sociology and physiology and biology and health, by collectivism, by State education, by a new psychological education and a number of other kindred means. All this is well, but it is not enough, if our theory of life is right and if this great mass of vital energism contains in itself the imprisoned supra-rational, if it has, as it then must have, the instinctive reaching out for something divine, absolute and infinite which is concealed in its blind strivings. Here too reason must be over-passed or surpass itself and become a passage to the Divine.

The first mark of the supra-rational, when it intervenes to take up any portion of our being, is the growth of absolute ideals ; and since life is Being and Force and the divine state of being is unity and the Divine in force is God as Power taking possession, the absolute vital ideals must be of that nature. Nowhere are they wanting. If we take the domestic and social life of man, we find them there in several forms ; but we need only note that of love, the absolute conjugal, maternal and paternal, filial and fraternal love, love of friends, love of comrades ; these things of which the poets have sung so persistently, are no mere glamour and illusion, however the egoisms and discords of our instinctive, infra-rational way of living may seem to contradict them, but divine possibilities and the means of our growth into unity of being. Certain religious disciplines have understood this and, taking them up boldly, applied them to our relations with God ; and by a converse process they can become for us beautiful and wonderful relations of God in man fulfilling himself in human life. And all the economic development of life itself, what is it but an attempt to get rid of the animal squalor and bareness which is

what obligatory poverty really means, and to give to man the divine ease and leisure of the gods ? It is pursued in a wrong way, no doubt, and with many ugly circumstances, but still the ideal is there. Politics itself, that apparent game of strife and deceit and charlatanism, is a large field of absolute idealisms. What of patriotism,—never mind the often ugly instincts from which it starts and which it still obstinately preserves,—but in its aspects of worship, self-giving, discipline, self-sacrifice ? The great political ideals of man, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, apart from the selfishnesses they serve and the rational and practical justifications with which they arm themselves, have had for their soul an ideal, some half-seen truth of the absolute, and have carried with them a worship, a loyalty, a loss of self in the idea which have made men ready to suffer and die for them. War and strife themselves have been schools of heroism ; they have created the *kshatriyās tyaktajīvitāḥ* of the Sanscrit epic phrase, the men of power who have abandoned their bodily life for a cause ; and without heroism man cannot grow into the Godhead. Courage, energy and strength are among the very first principles of the divine nature in action. And all this great vital, political, economical life of man with its two powers of competition and cooperation is sweeping forward towards the realisation of power and unity,—in two divine directions, therefore. For God in life is Power possessed of self-mastery, but also of mastery of His world, and man moves towards conquest of his world, his environment ; and in his fulfilment He is oneness, and the ideal of human unity is coming slowly into sight. The competitive nation-units are feeling, however feebly as yet, the call to cast themselves into a great unified cooperative life of humanity.

No doubt all is being worked out still very crudely by the confused clash of life-forces and ideas and the means proposed are too mechanical, they miss the truth



that the outer unity can only endure if it is founded on the inner oneness. But so life has moved always and must at first move. The instinct of ego-expansion is the means by which men have come into contact with each other and the struggle for possession is the first crude means towards union; the aggressive assertion of the smaller self is the first step towards the growth into the larger self. Into that the struggle of nations, ideas, civilisations, cultures, ideals, religions must eventually ascend. And when the suprarational ideal makes itself clear, the inner oneness will grow more swiftly and surely. Men will see more clearly that the growth of the ethical, the aesthetic, the ideative being of individuals and human groups towards unity—not meaning by that uniformity—can alone bring about the entire union of their life, and that this can only be done really and surely by the growth of a united spiritual life. Already some of the advocates of a mechanical social unity and perfection are awaking to the fact that in the God in man is the only clue to real union and the only power that can bring it about. And the God in man is not his reason, but the Divine in him of which reason and the rest, the vital being not excluded, are powers, means of growth and instruments of self-fulfilment. The Highest being seen, the Self on each grade of its being has the right to say "I am He."

---

# Hymns of the Atris

---

## THE SECOND HYMN TO THE DAWN

[ The Rishi hymns the divine Dawn, daughter of Heaven, as the bringer of the Truth, the bliss, the heavens of light, creator of the Light, giver of vision, maker, follower, leader of the paths of Truth, remover of the darkness, the eternal and ever youthful goddess of our godward journeying. ]

1 Dawn of the luminous journey, Dawn queen of truth, large with the Truth. how wide is the gleam from her rosy limbs,--Dawn divine who brings with her the heaven of light! Her the seers adore with their thoughts.

2 This is she who has the vision and she awakens man and makes his paths easy to travel and walks in his front. How large is her chariot, how vast and all-pervading the goddess, how she brings Light in the front of the days!

3 This is she who yokes her cows of rosy light; her journey does not fail and such is the treasure she makes that it passes not away. She hews out our paths to happiness; divine is she. far-shining her glory, many the hymns that rise to her, she brings with her every boon.

4 Behold her in her biune energy of earth and heaven, how she comes into being in her whiteness and discloses her body in our front. She follows perfectly the paths of Truth, as one who is wise and knows, and she hedges not in our regions.

5 Lo, how brilliant is her body when she is found and known! how she stands on high as if bathing in light that we may have vision! Driving away all enemies and all darknesses Dawn, the daughter of Heaven, has come with the Light.

6 Lo, the daughter of Heaven like a woman full of happiness moves to meet the gods and her form travels ever nearer to them. Unveiling all blessings for the giver of sacrifice the goddess young for ever has created the Light once more even as in the beginning.

---

# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## CHAPTER XXVII

Such then is the extreme possible form of a world-State, the form dreamed of by the socialistic, scientific, humanitarian thinkers who represent the modern mind at its highest point of self-consciousness and are therefore able to detect the trend of its tendencies, though to the half-rationalised mind of the ordinary man whose view does not go beyond the day and its immediate morrow, their speculations seem to be chimerical and utopian. In reality, they are nothing of the kind ; in their essence, not necessarily in their form, they are, as we have seen, not only the logical outcome, but the inevitable practical upshot of the incipient urge towards human unity, if it is pursued by a principle of mechanical unification,—that is to say, by the principle of the State. It is for this reason that we have found it necessary to show the practical principles and necessities which have underlain the growth of the unified and finally socialistic nation-State, in order to see how the same movement in international unification must lead to the same results by an analogous necessity of development. The State principle leads necessarily to uniformity, regulation, mechanisation ; its inevitable end is socialism. There is nothing fortuitous, no room for chance in political and social development, and the emergence of socialism was no accident or thing that

might not have been, but the inevitable result contained in the very seed of the State idea, inevitable from the moment it began to be hammered out. The work of the Alfreds and Charlemagnes contained this as their sure result,—men working almost always without knowing for what they have worked. But in modern times the signs are so clear that we need not be deceived or imagine, when we begin to lay a mechanical base for world-unification, that the result contained in the very effort will not insist on developing itself, however far-off it may seem from immediate possibilities. A strict unification, a vast uniformity, a regulated socialisation of united mankind will be the predestined fruit of our labour.

The result can only be avoided if an opposite force interposes and puts in its veto, as happened in Asia where the State idea could never go beyond a certain point because the fundamental principle of the national life was opposed to its full development. The races of Asia, even the most organised, have always been peoples rather than nations in the modern sense, or nations only in the sense of having a common soul-life, a common culture, a common social organisation, a common political head, but not nation-States. The State machine existed only for a restricted and superficial action : the real life of the people was determined by other powers with which it could not meddle ; indeed its principal function was to maintain sufficient political and administrative order—as far as possible an immutable order—for the real life of the people to function undisturbed in its own way, according to its own innate tendencies. Some such unity for the human race is possible in the place of an organised world-State, if the nations of mankind succeed in preserving their developed instinct of democratic nationalism intact and strong enough to resist the domination of the State idea ; the result would then be not a single nation of mankind and a world-State, but a single human people

with a free association of its nation-units or, it may be, some other new kind of group-units, assured by some sufficient machinery of international order in the peaceful and natural functioning of their social, economical and cultural relations.

Which then would be preferable? and to answer that question we have to ask ourselves, what would be the account of gain and loss for the life of the human race resulting from the creation of a unified world-State. In all probability the results would be, with all allowance for the great difference between then and now, very much the same in essence as those which we observe in the ancient Roman Empire. On the credit side we should have first one enormous gain, the assured peace of the world. It might not be absolutely assured against internal shocks and disturbances but, supposing certain outstanding questions to be settled with some approach to permanence, it could eliminate even such occasional violences of civil strife as disturbed the old Roman imperial economy and whatever perturbations there might be, need not disturb the settled fabric of civilisation so as to cast all again into the throes of a great radical and violent change. Peace assured, there would be an unparalleled development of ease and well-being; a great number of outstanding problems would be solved by the united intelligence of mankind working no longer in fragments, but as one; the vital life of the race would settle down into an assured rational order comfortable, well-regulated, well-informed, with a satisfactory machinery for meeting all difficulties, exigencies and problems with the least possible friction, disturbance, mere uncertainty of adventure and peril. At first there would be a great cultural and intellectual efflorescence; Science would organise itself for the betterment of human life and the increase of knowledge and mechanical efficiency; the various cultures of the world,—those that still exist as separate rea-

lities,—would not only exchange ideas more intimately, but throw their gains into the common fund ; new motives and forms would arise for a time in art and poetry ; men would meet each other much more closely and completely than before, develop a greater mutual understanding rid of many accidental motives of strife, hatred and repugnance which now exist, and arrive, if not at brotherhood,—which cannot come by mere political, social and cultural union,—yet at some imitation of it, a sufficiently kindly association and interchange. There would be an unprecedented splendour, ease and amenity in this development of human life, and no doubt some chief poet of the age, writing in the common or official tongue,—shall we say, Esperanto ?—would sing confidently of the approach of the golden age or even proclaim its actual arrival and eternal duration. But after a time there would be a dying down of force, a static condition of the human mind and human life, then stagnation, decay, disintegration. The soul of man would begin to wither in the midst of his acquisitions.

This would come about, principally, for the same reasons as in the Roman example, because the chief conditions of a vigorous life would be lost, liberty, free variation and the shock upon each other of freely developing differentiated lives. It may be said that this will not happen, because the world-State will be a free democratic State, not a liberty-stifling empire or autocracy, and because liberty and progress are the very principle of modern life and no development would be tolerated which went contrary to that principle. But in all this there is not really the security that seems to be offered ; what is now, need not endure under quite different circumstances and the idea that it will is a mirage thrown from the actualities of the present on the possibly quite different actualities of the future. Democracy is by no means a sure preservative of liberty ; on the contrary, we see to-day the demo-

cratic system of government march steadily towards such an organised annihilation of individual liberty as could not have been dreamed of in the old aristocratic and monarchical systems. From the more violent and brutal forms of despotic oppression which were associated with those systems, democracy has indeed delivered those nations which have been fortunate enough to achieve liberal forms of government, and that is a great gain. It revives now only in periods of excitement, often in the form of mob tyranny. But there is a deprivation of liberty which is more respectable in appearance, more subtle and systematised, more mild in its method because it has a greater force at its back, but for that very reason capable of becoming more effective and pervading. The tyranny of the majority has become a familiar phrase and its deadening effects have been depicted with a great force of resentment by certain of the modern intellectuals, \* but what the future promises us is something more formidable still, the tyranny of the whole, of the self-hypnotised mass over its constituent groups and units.

This is a very remarkable development, the more so as originally individual freedom was the ideal with which democracy set out both in ancient and modern times. The Greeks associated democracy with two main ideas, first, an effective and personal share by each citizen in the actual government, legislation, administration of the community, secondly, a great freedom of individual temperament and action. But neither of these characteristics can flourish in the modern type of democracy, although the United States of America have tended to a certain extent in this direction. In large States the personal share of each citizen in the government cannot be realised; he can only have an equal share in the periodical choice of his legislators and administrators. Even if these have not

---

\* Eg. Ibsen in his drama, "An Enemy of the People."



practically to be chosen from a class which is not the whole or even the majority of the community, at present the middle class, still these legislators and administrators do not really represent their electors,—they represent another formless, bodiless entity which has taken the place of monarch and aristocracy, that impersonal group-being which assumes some sort of outward form and body and conscious action in the huge mechanism of the modern State. Against this power the individual is much more helpless than he was against old oppressions, and when he feels its pressure grinding him into its uniform moulds, he has no resource except either an impotent anarchism or else a retreat, still to some extent possible, into the freedom of his soul or the freedom of his intellectual being.

For this is one gain of modern democracy, which ancient liberty did not realise to the same extent and which has not yet been renounced, a full freedom of speech and thought. So long as this lasts, the fear of a static condition of humanity and subsequent stagnation might seem to be groundless, especially when it is accompanied by universal education which provides the largest possible human field for producing an effectuating force. Freedom of thought and speech—the two necessarily go together, since there can be no real freedom of thought where a padlock is put upon freedom of speech,—is not indeed complete without freedom of association ; for free speech means free propagandism and propagandism only becomes effective by association for the realisation of its objects : but that liberty also exists with more or less of qualifications or safeguards in all democratic States. But it is a question whether this liberty has been won for the race with an entire security,—apart from its occasional suspensions in free and its restriction in subject countries,—and whether the future has not certain surprises in this direction. It will be the last freedom directly attacked by the all-regulating State, which will first seek to regu-

late the whole life of the individual in the type approved by the community ; when it sees how all-important is the thought in shaping the life, it will be led to take hold of that too by forming the thought of the individual through a State education, by training him to the acceptance of the approved communal, ethical, social, cultural, religious ideas, as was done in many ancient forms of education ; only if it finds this weapon ineffective, is it likely to limit freedom of thought directly on the plea of danger to the State and to civilisation. Already we see the right of the State to interfere with individual thought announced here and there in a most ominous manner. One would have imagined religious liberty at least was assured to mankind ; yet recently we have seen an exponent of "new thought" advancing positively the doctrine that the State is under no obligation to recognise the religious liberty of the individual and that even if it grants freedom of religious thought,—as a matter of expediency, not of right,—it is not called upon to allow freedom of cult ! And indeed this seems logical ; for if the State has the right to regulate the whole life of the individual, it must surely have the right to regulate his religion, which is so important a part of his life, and his thought, which has so powerful an effect upon life.

Supposing an all-regulating socialistic world-State to be established, freedom of thought under such a regime would necessarily mean a criticism not only of the details, but of the very principles of the existing state of things. This criticism could only take one direction, the direction of anarchism, whether of the spiritual Tolstoian kind or else the intellectual anarchism which is now the creed of a small minority but still a growing force in many European countries. It would declare the free development of the individual as its gospel ; it would denounce government as an evil and no longer at all a necessary evil ; it would affirm the full and free religious, ethical, intellec-

tual, temperamental growth of the individual from within as the true ideal of human life and all else as things not worth having at the price of the renunciation of this ideal, a renunciation which it would describe as the loss of his soul. It would preach as the ideal of society a free association or brotherhood of individuals without government or compulsion.

What would the world-State do with this kind of free thought ? It might tolerate it so long as it did not translate itself into individual and associated action, but the moment it spread or practically asserted itself, the whole principle of its own being would be attacked and its very base would be sapped and undermined. To stop the destruction at its root or else consent to its own subversion would be the only alternatives before it. But even before any such necessity arises, it is not impossible that the principle of regulation of all things by the State would have extended itself to the regulation of the mental as well as the physical life of man by the communal mind which was the ideal of former civilisations. A static order of society would be the necessary consequence, since without the freedom of the individual a society cannot remain progressive ; it must settle into the rut or the groove of a regulated perfection—or of something to which it gives that name because of the rationality of system and symmetrical idea of order which it embodies. The communal mass is always conservative and static in its consciousness and only moves slowly in the tardy process of subconscious Nature, it is the free individual who is the conscious progressive : when he is able to impart that progressive consciousness to the mass, then only can we have a progressive society.

---

## About Astrology

The subject of this book is one which stands nowadays put away under a sort of intellectual ban placed on it some centuries ago by the scientific and rationalistic European mind and not yet lifted. Mr. N. P. Subramania Iyer has undertaken an astrological series which will deal with the various parts of astrology, and the present volume contains the text and translation of the *Kalaprakāśika*, a treatise on the selection of the right times by astrological rule for undertaking any and every action of human life. The book is well printed and got up, the translation admirably done in a style free enough to avoid all awkwardness,—the author has a thorough control of the English tongue and an excellent style of his own,—but perfectly faithful to the matter of the text. But the most interesting part of the work for the ordinary reader is the introduction, in which he gives amidst other matter the psychological explanation of the influence of the planets and states for what they stand in relation to the Indian Vedantic philosophy of existence. I have not seen elsewhere any exposition of the subject equally original and illuminative.

Astrology is in the general mind associated with that class of subjects which goes under the name of the occult, and along with others of its class it has long been discredited by modern "enlightenment", one does not quite know on what grounds or with what rational justification. It has its psychic and mystical side, but that is not its ordinary presentation; there it claims to be a science like any other with fixed processes and an exact and definite system of rules which ought to be perfectly capable of verification or of disproof by experiment and induction like any other science. Its basis is astronomical and mathematical, its data perfectly open and positive and in no way hidden or occult, nor does it at all shrink back from the test or hide itself in secrecy and mystery. It does not indeed give ordinarily the why, but only the how of the causes and effects it professes to establish, but so it is with all other sciences; they do not give the reason of things, but only their processes. Yet astrology is supposed at some indefinite time in the march of human mind to have been exploded,—along with such things as witch-

---

<sup>c</sup> *Kalaprakāśika*; the Standard Book on the Election System: by N. P. Subramania Iyer. Tanjore.

craft and demonology, not to speak of the existence of spirits and the immortality of the soul,—and there is a sort of idea that it has been disproved and therefore put aside as a superstition which no reasonable man can even look at except with a lofty disdain, much less stoop to investigate with an open mind its truth or falsity. Still the anathema of Science has not been able to destroy it ; in Europe it has revived, even though its practice as a profession is punishable by the law, and in India it has always survived. It is not indeed the habit of educated Indians to profess explicitly their belief in it, they fight shy of that as a rule, but it is largely consulted by numbers of them, as also by many Europeans. This is an anomalous position which ought to be corrected. Either astrology is a true science and should be investigated, proved, improved where defective and generally rehabilitated in opinion, or else it is a pseudo-science and should be investigated and disproved so as to cut the ground away finally from all secret belief or open credulity.

As a matter of fact astrology has never been scientifically disproved, nor has any rational ground ever been advanced for treating it as a pseudo-science. It simply came to be assumed at a certain period and under certain intellectual influences that it was a childish superstition. Or if there were any grounds, then it was left aside because astrologers were charlatans, because many, perhaps most predictions went wrong, but most of all because it was thought that in the nature of things, in any rational theory of the universe the planets simply could not have any influence on our characters, lives and actions. None of these grounds are sufficient. If many astrologers are charlatans, so also have there been many quacks in the field of medicine ; at one time indeed not only did they pullulate, but the system of medicine itself seemed so defective that there were plenty of clear and enlightened minds who were inclined with Moliere to denounce the whole thing as a gross pseudo-science, an elaborate and solemn system of ignorance, humbug and quackery. Supposing that view had prevailed,—it could not, merely because men are too vitally interested in healing their ailments and preserving their bodies and know no other way of doing it,—that would not have done away with the truth underlying the science.

That many predictions go wrong, proves no more essentially against astrology than the constant failure of doctors to heal diseases proves against their science. The first reason of this failure may be that a great number of practising astrologers are either charlatans who seek to please their clients rather than predict by scientific rule,—of that kind there are perhaps many—or else inefficient and ignorant men who practise only by rule of thumb, perfunctorily and with a main eye upon their fees. But if even capable astrologers fail, that also only proves that either the science or their way of treating it is largely empirical or that some of its rules and theories may be errors. But every science has to pass through its empirical stage and some—as, again, the science of medicine,—have hardly emerged from it, and every science too burdens itself in its progress with false generalisations, incorrect theories and imperfect rules which have afterwards to be discarded or amended. As the main point in medicine is whether herbs and metals have or have not certain effects on the body and whether their workings can be substantiated by experience in a sufficient number of cases to establish a regular relation of cause and effect, so it is in astrology with the fundamental question of planetary influences upon earth and its creatures.

The *a priori* argument from the rational theory of the universe cannot stand. There is nothing essentially irrational in the idea that in this solar system, so closely linked together, there may be mutual influences of all the planets upon each other or that the beings of a particular planet are powerfully influenced or even dominated by influences from the others. The question remains, the *a priori* rationality being admitted or at least not summarily dismissed, first, whether it is so in fact and, secondly, how far those influences go and of what nature they are. Astrology affirms that they not only affect our bodies, but also our psychical being. If matter and mind were entirely independent entities having no influence or determining effect upon each other, then such a result could not be ; but that is not the case. According to the materialistic view of the universe which claims to be the sole rationalistic view, mind is itself an effect of matter and all its states and movements are determined by matter. There is nothing then impossible, planetary influence

being once admitted, in the action of material bodies producing psychical conditions on the earth and thereby determining our psychical states and movements. In a more truly rationalistic view mind and matter are always influencing and determining each other ; here too, given a universal mind and matter so acting upon individual matter and mind, the movements of the planetary system may be one or even the first nodus of their activities, and the assertions of astrology become at least primarily credible.

Farther, astrology affirms that these influences determine the whole course of our lives and that the all-important element is time. That raises the whole question of the influence of Time upon human beings and events ; does Time determine the course of our lives and the states of our being and, if so, how far and in what way ? Or to put the question more precisely, as it is raised by astrology, do or can the conditions reigning at a given critical time, in this case the moment of birth, determine our physical and psychological conditions and the whole course of our future lives, or determine them to any considerable extent ? and are the relative movements and therefore the mutual positions of the sun and planets with the earth and each other either the nodus or in some way the effective signs of these determinations ? And, secondly, do the developing time conditions which come afterwards, by themselves or viewed in reference to the original conditions, determine from moment to moment, from time to time the subsequent evolution of our primary physical and psychological conditions and the course of linked and successive circumstances which make up the history of our lives ? and if so, again, are the relative movements and mutual positions of the sun and planets at any given time the nodus or the effective signs of this later determination also ? can they therefore be taken for all practical purposes as determinants, or at any rate as sure signs by which the determinations of our life and being can be discovered ? That is the question which astrology raises, and it is evidently a perfectly legitimate and rational question ; nor can we on *a priori* grounds condemn and put away an affirmative answer, which is based upon past experience systematised into rules and theories, as a superstition or a childish folly. Granted that all things here are a chain of cause and effect and that if and so far as we know that chain, scientific pre-

diction becomes in that proportion possible,—two propositions which no one, surely, will have the temerity to dispute,—there is no inherent improbability in the clue to happenings human and other on the planets being found in the motions of those planets. Astronomy is in a sense the primary physical science, for the first facts which give all the others their field are astronomical facts; it may well be that in the psycho-physical field the same rule holds and that there the first facts may be astrological.

The *a priori* objections disappearing, the next step is to ask ourselves whether there is a sufficient *prima facie* empirical case for inquiring into the actual truth of astrology. This at present depends upon the experience of isolated individuals, a very unsatisfactory basis. But if this experience could be collected, sifted and published, I believe it would be found that a formidable *prima facie* case exists in favour of astrology, much stronger than that which encouraged the Society for psychical research to carry on its work in another psycho-physical field to such important conclusions. I may state my own experience in the matter in the belief, justified by many instances, that it is only typical of the experience of hundreds of others. My first accidental contact with an Indian astrologer was not encouraging. This gentleman was the most accomplished thought-reader I have ever seen; for he asked me to think my question without speaking it and not only successfully named the unspoken question I had fixed on, but three others which had crossed my mind, one of them only in the merest flash and without leaving any impression behind: this he pretended to do by mathematical calculation, an operation which I took leave to regard as humbug. For when it came to his answers, I found that he was still doing thought-reading and not astrology; he simply echoed the hopes or thoughts in my mind and his predictions did not come within one hundred miles of the truth. Other practitioners I have found to belong, a few plainly to the class of mere flattering charlatans, but most to the inefficient who read by rule of thumb and have made no profound study of their science. On the other hand with capable astrologers the results have been often of such a remarkable accuracy as to put quite aside any possibility of chance hit, mere coincidence, intelligent prevision or any of the current explanations. I may ins-



tance the father of a friend of mine, a deep student of the science but not a professional, who predicted accurately the exact year, month, day, hour and even minute of his own death. In my own case accuracy was hampered by the inability to fix the precise moment of my birth ; still some of the results were extraordinary. Two may be mentioned, from one and the same astrologer, which related to my public career. One, given when I had not yet plunged into the political vortex and my then obscure personality was quite unknown to the astrologer, predicted as an inevitable certitude of my career a political struggle with powerful non-Indian adversaries during which for a time even my life would fall under the shadow of danger. The other, given at the time of my first prosecution in the *Bande Mataram* case, predicted three successive criminal trials in each of which the prosecution would fail. And these are only two instances out of a number. Supposing all well-authenticated evidence of the kind to be collected, I am convinced there would be an overwhelmingly strong *prima facie* case and even a body of sufficiently strong empirical proof to establish at least a nucleus of truth in astrology.

That would be the first step. For if astrology is a science and is to take its proper place, the first necessity is to dissipate by an appeal to the empirical mind of the general public as well as of the sceptical thinker the great mass of unenquiring prejudice which now exists against it. To publish the text and translation of the best authorities, as Mr. Iyer is now doing, with illuminating introductions is a preliminary need in this case so that we may know what we have to go upon. The second is to mass evidence of the empirical truth of the science, giving in each case the prediction in all its details, the more detailed the better, the astrological rules on which it was based and the event, each detail of the event being compared with the corresponding detail of the prediction. Only then would there be a clear field for the consideration of the scientific and philosophical doubts, questions and problems which would still arise ; but this, though the most important aspect of the matter, I must leave for future handling.

A. G.

# आयं

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th December 1917

### CONTENTS

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Ch. XXXIX. The Ascent out of the Ignorance	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXVII. The Higher and the Lower Knowledge	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Divine Birth and Divine Works (3)	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
The Conquest of Self— To Renounce the Fruit of Works	
HYMNS OF THE ATRIS.....	Aurobindo Ghose
A Hymn to Savitri	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT XVII	
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXVIII	
THE FUTURE POETRY	
SENTENCES FROM BHARTRIHARI	
In Praise of Virtue	



# The Life Divine

---

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE ASCENT OUT OF THE IGNORANCE

A heightening then of our force of consciousness, now only mental, until it not only admits a new, a supra-mental or spiritual principle, but rises into that and lives in it, is the whole meaning of what we have called the divine life, or rather of the growth out of the ordinary, the half-animal humanity into the divine being and the divine life. This heightening of the force of consciousness in our whole manifest being so that we may raise it into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from the mind into the spirit, is not only the whole aim and process of religion, of all higher askesis, of Yoga, but it is also the very aim of our life itself, the secret purpose found in the sum of its labour. The principle of life in us seeks to confirm and perfect itself on the planes of mind, vitality and body which it already possesses, but also to go beyond and transform these into means for the conscious spirit to unfold itself. Otherwise, if it were merely some part of ourselves—intellect, heart, will or another—which, dissatisfied with the present existence, were striving to get away from it to a greater height of living and leave the rest of the being to take care of itself or to perish, the philosophy of a world-fleeing asceticism would be entirely justified. But this is not the real trend of our existence, which is a labour of Nature in us to as-

cend with all itself into a higher principle of being than it has yet attained, not to destroy itself in order that that higher principle may be exclusively affirmed. To heighten the force of consciousness into the spiritual principle is the indispensable means, but it is not the object and the sole thing to be done.

The object is to live on that new height in all our being, and therefore the heightening must not be so done as to drop away our whole natural being into the indeterminate stuff of Nature and attain to the inactive principle of Spirit ; it must be so done that the whole of our being rises into the spiritual nature. An integral transformation is the integral aim of the Spirit in its universal urge of self-transcendence. It is for this reason that the self-transcending process of Nature is not confined to a heightening of herself into a new principle ; as we have seen, it includes a widening so as to establish a larger field of life in which the greater power of this new and higher principle may have play. This action is not confined to an utmost possible wideness in the essential play of the new principle itself ; it consists also in the taking up of that which is lower into the higher values, so that the divine or spiritual life will not only take up the mental, vital, physical life into itself transformed and spiritualised, but give them a much wider play than was possible to them so long as they were living on their own level. The mental, physical, vital life will not be destroyed, lessened, impaired by being spiritualised, but will become much richer, greater, more powerful and more perfect than in their unspiritualised condition.

But what we have now to note is that this process of growth, of heightening, widening and integralisation, is in its nature that growth out of a sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge which at the start of this portion of our enquiry we insisted upon as the real character of the spiritual evolution. The crux of that ignorance is the

constitutional,\* the ignorance of the true character of our becoming. It consists in a limitation by the plane we inhabit and by the predominant principle of our nature. The plane we inhabit is the plane of matter, the predominant principle in our nature is the intelligent mind with the sense-mind as its support and pedestal. Therefore the preoccupation of the intelligent mind with the material existence as shown to it through the sense-mind is the stamp of the constitutional ignorance peculiar to the human being ; the attempt to grow out of it is the whole key to a real progress of our humanity. For our ignorance, as we have said, is not complete ; it is a limitation of consciousness, not the nescience which is the stamp of the same ignorance in purely material existences, those which have not only matter for their plane but matter for their dominant principle. It is a partial, a limiting, a dividing and therefore a falsifying knowledge. Out of that falsifying limitation we have to grow.

Certainly, the first step that man has to take is to know this physical existence as well as he can by applying the intelligent mind to such knowledge of it as his sense-mind can give to him ; but this is only a preliminary step and, if we stop there, we have made no real progress : we are where we were and have only gained more physical elbow-room to move about and more power to our elbow to push things about and jostle and hustle around amid the throng of physical forces and existences. The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material ether and electricity, is no essential gain. That is why the gospel of materialism in spite of its dazzling physical triumphs proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical science with

---

\* See Chapter XXXII, Vol. III. page 451.

all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness for the human race. Our true happiness lies in our true growth, in a complete victory throughout the range of our being, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature ; and our true victory comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence, by ascent. We have first to heighten our force of consciousness so as to get a fuller hold of the mental existence which is much more than the physical our true home, precisely because we are dominantly mind and not matter, mental much rather than physical beings.

But even this is not enough. We get indeed a much subtler higher and wider existence, consciousness, force, happiness in proportion as we rise in the scale of mind ; not only so but we are able to embrace more of the vital and physical existence itself, to know it better, to use it better, to give it nobler values, a broader range, a more sublimated action : in other words, by thus heightening our mental consciousness we get also a great widening of our being and field and are able to take up powerfully the vital and physical life also on a much larger scale and to much higher issues. For, we must repeat,—it cannot be too often repeated,—we cannot really know entirely or use aright even the material existence by physical science and knowledge alone, by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone : to know it, to use rightly it we must go beyond it ; we must know what is within it and behind it. But still we are not merely embodied minds ; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of nature. We have to heighten our force of consciousness into that, to widen by that still more largely, universally, infinitely our range of being and our field, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and in a larger plan, spiritually : we have to integralise our being

in the being and consciousness, by the force and for the joy of the spirit. Then only we change the constitutional ignorance into the true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For really we are spirit, at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field, but not our only field. This, however, is only at present; for there are in us, dormant or imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and proper to the spiritual nature which we can use, and there are higher fields of action than the physical, vital and mental existence. Therefore we have not to be satisfied by a vague or an ecstatic ascent into spirit or by a formless exaltation through the touch of its infinities; we have to possess its planes and its instruments, the supermind and those yet higher essential principles of pure bliss, pure force, pure consciousness, pure being, and raise by them our normal human nature into the divine. Then we shall possess in effective knowledge the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the ignorance.

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, cannot be done at all to the extent or in the way we have indicated, unless we conquer at the same time our psychological ignorance; for the two are bound up with each other. Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is our conscient waking self carried on by active memory from moment to moment of time. Behind is that vast triple action of our secret being without which our superficial consciousness and activity could not exist or act. In material things only the activity is manifest, superficial; the whole consciousness is secret, subliminal, unmanifest to themselves; in us the consciousness is partly manifest, partly awake. But we can enlarge it far beyond its present capacities by bringing into play ranges of our being which are at present subconscient, circumconscient and superconscient



and by entering into them through various means and bringing back with us to the surface their secrets.

The subconscious contains that part of our constitution of being which is purely physical, purely vital and also the lowest ranges of the sense-mind which in our evolution we have overpassed. Of these we bring only so much to the surface as our waking sense-mind and intelligence need for their operations and in bringing them up we do not do it in their own values, but by a translation into the values of our waking human sense and intelligence. It is only by an experience abnormal to us at present that we can become aware of our real bodily being and vitality, aware too of the mechanical, subhuman physical and vital mind which informs it, a consciousness in the body and its cells which is not ours, but which is there all the same and is therefore a part of our being. But this we can do not by descending into the subconscious, which would only plunge us into a comatose stupor, but by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down into, embracing and becoming aware of the secrets of our physical being.

The circumconscious is that large action of the intelligence and sense-mind embracing our waking consciousness which is not brought to the front, which is subliminal, in the modern phrase, and of which our waking sense and intelligence is only a selection for the utility of our present mental and physical life on earth. This too we can only become aware of by rising to a higher plane of mind than that which our waking consciousness inhabits. For in this superconscious are included both the higher planes of our mental being and also all the planes of our supramental and pure spiritual being. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, so that we may dwell on the superior planes of mind into which the supermind and the spirit can throw themselves and can make themselves initially manifest and govern from them

our lower being ; afterwards, when our humanity is ready for the yet sublimer ascent, we may get beyond the mental into the supramental itself and the pure spiritual. It is quite possible indeed, without actually ascending into the superconscious mental planes or, at least, without actually living on them, to get rid to a certain extent of our constitutional ignorance, to become aware of ourselves as spiritual beings and to spiritualise, though very imperfectly, our normal human life. This is done by opening ourselves to these higher planes and receiving their enlightening messages and transforming influence : that is always possible to any and every human being. But this is only a preliminary stage. To get to the unity with the divine being, consciousness, power, bliss we must ascend beyond the planes of mind which we now inhabit. Here too it is not only a heightening that is needed : that might lead to possession of the higher levels only in the state of ecstatic trance. We have to bring this possession into our waking life, and this implies a widening into immense ranges of being and new activities which are impossible to our present narrow and limited consciousness. It implies also the taking up of our present conscious being and activities and the giving them a new, an infinite, a divine value which transfigures our whole human existence. The complete method of Nature in self-transcendence implies always this triple movement.

With this movement must necessarily be associated a rejection of our present narrowing temporal ignorance. Not only do we live from moment to moment of time, but our whole view is limited to our life in the present body between this birth and death. As it does not go farther back in the past, so it does not extend farther out into the future ; we are limited by the physical memory of the present life. This limitation of our temporal consciousness is intimately dependent upon the preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life in which

it is at present acting, and so long as the material pre-occupation persists, the growth into the divine life is impossible. We have to realise our persistent existence in time as well as our eternal existence beyond it ; until we do this, we cannot get our self-knowledge into the right focus and our whole consciousness and action will be vitiated by a great practical error which prevents us from seeing the true nature, purpose and conditions of our being. This is why the belief in immortality is made so vital a point in most religions. But a belief is not sufficient; in order that we may possess the true self-knowledge of our being in time, we must live in the consciousness of our immortality, that is to say, both of our perpetual and of our timeless being.

For immortality does not mean merely some kind of personal survival of the bodily death, but the eternal being of our self-existence without beginning or end, beyond the whole succession of physical births and deaths through which we pass and beyond also the alternations of our existence in this and other worlds, and secondly, the perpetual continuity of our temporal existence and experience from life to life, from world to world. The first is the knowledge of self in the Non-birth, to use the language of the Upanishad ; the second is the knowledge of self in the birth ; and it is the simultaneous possession of both in their right relation to each other that gives us the integral enjoyment of our divine and immortal being. By the first we become free from the chain of birth and death, that great object of so many Indian disciplines ; by the second we are able to possess freely, with right knowledge, without ignorance, without bondage by the chain of our actions the experience of the spirit in its successions of time. To exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage to the hour and the succession of the moments is the first condition of the divine consciousness and the divine life ; to possess and govern

from that eternal being the course and process of the becoming is the practical outcome of a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery. This is brought about naturally by a transcendence of our material preoccupation and a constant living on the higher planes of the mind and the spirit. The heightening of our consciousness into its spiritual principle is attended by its heightening out of the transient life from moment to moment into the eternal life of our immortal consciousness, and with it comes a widening of our range and field in time and a taking up and higher use of our present existence. Knowing ourselves as eternal spirit which uses all the worlds and all lives for various self-experience, possesses an eternal life which perpetually develops its activities through successive physical existences, and figures itself in a soul and mental being which determine their own perpetual life-development, we are able to live not as slaves of a blind *karmic* impulsion, but as masters of our being and becoming.

Equally, we get rid of the egoistic ignorance ; for so long as we are at all bound by that, the divine life must either be unattainable or imperfect. The ego is, we have seen, a falsification of our true individuality, a limiting self-identification of it with this body, this life, this mind ; it is a separation from other souls by which we are shut up in our own individual experience and cannot live in our universal being ; and it is a separation from God, our highest self and our one self in all. The heightening of our consciousness into the spirit is also a heightening by which we arise out of the bodily, vital, mental ego into the highest self and therefore into the being of God. It must be attended by a widening through which we break out of the imprisonment in our separate individual being and, becoming universal, identify ourselves in consciousness with the spiritual being, life, mind, physical existence of all. At the same time it is not a destroy-

ing of our individual existence, but a taking up and transforming of it into a conscious term of the universal being and a figure of the transcendent Divine.

In the same movement by ascending into the spirit we have got rid of the cosmic ignorance, for we know ourselves in our timeless immutable self at the same time that we possess widely the basis of its play in time, the one and the many, the Brahman's eternal unity and eternal multiplicity. Through it we get back to the consciousness of the Absolute as the source of all these circumstances and relations, possess them all with the utmost wideness in their dependence on and their going back to their source and are therefore able to take them up and raise them to their absolute values. The original ignorance disappears. Our self-knowledge will then be complete in all its essentials and by that self-knowledge our practical ignorance which figures itself in sin, sorrow, error and all the confusions and discords of life, will automatically be removed. For of right action and right being, not in the imperfect human sense of our petty moralities, but in the large and luminous movement of a divine living, the conditions are union with God, unity with all beings and a life from within outwards in which the source of all thought, will and action shall be the Spirit working through the truth and the divine law spontaneous in the supermind.

Thus we see that the growth into the divine life is a growth out of the sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge, and the growth is a completion of the upward process of Nature by which it heightens the forces of consciousness from principle to higher principle of being. This ascent is complete when it reaches the spiritual principle and plane and from that widens to take up all cosmic and individual existence on the lower planes into its view, so that the true individual man, conscious and free, lives out of the transcendent Divine in the universal consciousness of Sachchidananda.

# The Synthesis of Yoga

---

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER KNOWLEDGE

We have now completed our view of the path of Knowledge and seen to what it leads. First, the end of Yoga Knowledge is God-possession, it is to possess God and be possessed by him through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Reality. But not merely in some abstraction away from our present existence, but here also ; therefore to possess the Divine in himself, the Divine in the world, the Divine within, the Divine in all things and all beings. It is to possess oneness with God and through that to possess also oneness with the universal, with the cosmos and all existences ; therefore to possess the infinite diversity also in the oneness, but on the basis of oneness and not on the basis of division. It is to possess God in his personality and his impersonality ; in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities ; in time and beyond time ; in his action and in his silence ; in the finite and in the infinite. It is to possess him not only in pure self, but in all self ; not only in self, but in Nature ; not only in spirit, but in supermind, mind, life and body ; to possess him with the spirit, with the mind, with the vital and the physical consciousness ; and it is again for all these

to be possessed by him, so that our whole being is one with him, full of him, governed and driven by him. It is, since God is oneness, for our physical consciousness to be one with the soul and the nature of the material universe; for our life, to be one with all life; for our mind, to be one with the universal mind; for our spirit, to be identified with the universal spirit. It is to merge in him in the absolute and find him in all relations.

Secondly, it is to put on the divine being and the divine nature. And since God is Sachchidananda, it is to raise our being into the divine being, our consciousness into the divine consciousness, our energy into the divine energy, our delight of existence into the divine delight of being. And it is not only to lift ourselves into this higher consciousness, but to widen into it in all our being, because it is to be found on all the planes of our existence and in all our members, so that our mental, vital, physical existence shall become full of the divine nature. Our intelligent mentality is to become a play of the divine knowledge-will, our mental soul-life a play of the divine love and delight, our vitality a play of the divine life, our physical being a mould of the divine substance. This God-action in us is to be realised by an opening of ourselves to the divine gnosis and divine Ananda and, in its fullness, by an ascent into and a permanent dwelling in the gnosis and the Ananda. For though we live physically on the material plane and in normal outward-going life the mind and soul are preoccupied with material existence, this externality of our being is not a binding limitation. We can raise our internal consciousness from plane to plane of the relations of Purusha with Prakriti, and even become, instead of the mental being dominated by the physical soul and nature, the gnostic being or the bliss-self and assume the gnostic or the bliss nature. And by this raising of the inner life we can transform our whole outward-going existence; instead of a life domi-

nated by matter we shall then have a life dominated by spirit with all its circumstances moulded and determined by the purity of being, the consciousness infinite even in the finite, the divine energy, the divine joy and bliss of the spirit.

This is the goal ; we have seen also what are the essentials of the method. But here we have first to consider briefly one side of the question of method which we have hitherto left untouched. In the system of an integral Yoga the principle must be that all life is a part of the Yoga ; but the knowledge which we have been describing seems to be not the knowledge of what is ordinarily understood as life, but of something behind life. There are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world ; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation. Ordinarily, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two, and it is supposed that when we get to the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge, becomes of no concern to us ; but in reality they are two sides of one seeking. All knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Mankind has first to seek this knowledge through the external life ; for until its mentality is sufficiently developed, spiritual knowledge is not really possible, and in proportion as it is developed, the possibilities of spiritual knowledge become richer and fuller.

Science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself are means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life. At first it is the workings of life and forms of Nature which occupy us, but as



we go deeper and deeper and get a completer view and experience, each of these lines brings us face to face with God. Science at its limits, even physical Science, is compelled to perceive in the end the infinite, the universal, the spirit, the divine intelligence and will in the material universe. Still more easily must this be the end with the psychic sciences which deal with the operations of higher and subtler planes and powers of our being and come into contact with the beings and the phenomena of the worlds behind which are unseen, not sensible by our physical organs, but ascertainable by the subtle mind and senses. Art leads to the same end ; the aesthetic human being intensely preoccupied with Nature through aesthetic emotion must in the end arrive at spiritual emotion and perceive not only the infinite life, but the infinite presence within her ; preoccupied with beauty in the life of man he must in the end come to see the divine, the universal, the spiritual in humanity. Philosophy dealing with the principles of things must come to perceive the Principle of all these principles and investigate its nature, attributes and essential workings. So ethics must eventually perceive that the law of good which it seeks is the law of God and depends on the being and nature of the Master of the law. Psychology leads from the study of mind and the soul in living beings to the perception of the one soul and one mind in all things and beings. The history and study of man like the history and study of Nature lead towards the perception of the eternal and universal Power and Being whose thought and will work out through the cosmic and human evolution. Action itself forces us into contact with the divine Power which works through, uses, overrules our actions. The intellect begins to perceive and understand, the emotions to feel and desire and revere, the will to turn itself to the service of the Divine without whom Nature and man cannot exist or move and by conscious knowledge of whom alone we can arrive at our

highest possibilities.

It is here that Yoga steps in. It begins by using knowledge, emotion and action for the possession of the Divine. For Yoga is the conscious and perfect seeking of union with the Divine towards which all the rest was an ignorant and imperfect moving and seeking. At first, then, Yoga separates itself from the action and method of the lower knowledge. For while this lower knowledge approaches God indirectly from outside and never enters his secret dwelling-place, Yoga calls us within and approaches him directly ; while that seeks him through the intellect and becomes conscious of him from behind a veil, Yoga seeks him through realisation, lifts the veil and get the full vision ; where that only feels the presence and the influence, Yoga enters into the presence and fills itself with the influence ; where that is only aware of the workings and through them gets some glimpse of the Reality, Yoga identifies our inner being with the Reality and sees from that the workings. Therefore the methods of Yoga are different from the methods of the lower knowledge.

The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them. The lower knowledge is preoccupied with the appearances and workings ; it is the first necessity of the higher to get away from them to the Reality of which they are the appearances and the Being and Power of conscious existence of which they are the workings. It does this by three movements each necessary to each other, by each of which the others become complete,—purification, concentration, identification. The object of purification is to make the whole mental being a clear mirror in which the divine reality can be reflected, a clear vessel and an unobstructing channel into which the divine presence and

through which the divine influence can be poured, a subtilised stuff which the divine nature can take possession of, new-shape and use to divine issues. For the mental being at present reflects only the confusions created by the mental and physical view of the world, is a channel only for the disorders of the ignorant lower nature and full of obstructions and impurities which prevent the higher from acting ; therefore the whole shape of our being is deformed and imperfect, indocile to the highest influences and turned in its action to ignorant and inferior utilities. It reflects even the world falsely ; it is incapable of reflecting the Divine.

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many-branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena ; we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth ; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to attain it and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession ; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it ; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality.

None of these things can be done by the methods

of the lower knowledge. It is true that here also they have a preparing action, but up to a certain point and to a certain degree of intensity only, and it is where their action ceases that the action of Yoga takes up our growth into the Divine and finds the means to complete it. All pursuit of knowledge, if not vitiated by a too earthward tendency, tends to refine, to subtilise, to purify the being. In proportion as we become more mental, we attain to a subtler action of our whole nature which becomes more apt to reflect and receive higher thoughts, a purer will, a less physical truth, more inward influences. The power of ethical knowledge and the ethical habit of thought and will to purify is obvious. Philosophy not only purifies the reason and predisposes it to the contact of the universal and the infinite, but tends to stabilise the nature and create the tranquillity of the sage ; and tranquillity is a sign of increasing self-mastery and purity. The pre-occupation with universal beauty even in its aesthetic forms has an intense power for refining and subtilising the nature, and at its highest it is a great force for purification. Even the scientific habit of mind and the disinterested preoccupation with cosmic law and truth not only refine the reasoning and observing faculty, but have, when not counteracted by other tendencies, a steadying, elevating and purifying influence on the mind and moral nature which has not been sufficiently noticed.

The concentration of the mind and the training of the will towards the reception of the truth and living in the truth is also an evident result, a perpetual necessity of these pursuits ; and at the end or in their highest intensities they may and do lead first to an intellectual, then to a reflective perception of the divine Reality which may culminate in a sort of preliminary identification with it. But all this cannot go beyond a certain point. The systematic purification of the whole being for an integral reflection and taking in of the divine reality can only be

done by the special methods of Yoga. Its absolute concentration has to take the place of the dispersed concentrations of the lower knowledge ; the vague and ineffective identification which is all the lower knowledge can bring, has to be replaced by the complete, intimate, imperative and living union which Yoga brings.

Nevertheless, Yoga does not either in its path or in its attainment exclude and throw away the forms of the lower knowledge, except when it takes the shape of an extreme asceticism or a mysticism altogether intolerant of this other divine mystery of the world-existence. It separates itself from them by the intensity, largeness and height of its objective and the specialisation of its methods to suit its aim ; but it not only starts from them, but for a certain part of the way carries them with it and uses them as auxiliaries. Thus it is evident how largely ethical thought and practice,—not so much external as internal conduct,—enter into the preparatory method of Yoga, into its aim at purity. Again the whole method of Yoga is psychological ; it might almost be termed the consummate practice of a perfect psychological knowledge. The data of philosophy are the supports from which it begins in the realisation of God through the principles of his being ; only it carries the intelligent understanding which is all philosophy gives, into an intensity which carries it beyond thought into vision and beyond understanding into realisation and possession ; what philosophy leaves abstract and remote, it brings into a living nearness and spiritual concreteness. The aesthetic and emotional mind and aesthetic forms are used by Yoga as a support for concentration even in the Yoga of Knowledge and are, sublimated, the whole means of the Yoga of love and delight, as life and action, sublimated, are the whole means of the Yoga of works. Contemplation of God in Nature, contemplation and service of God in man and in the life of man and of the world in its past, present

and future, are equally elements of which the Yoga of knowledge can make use to complete the realisation of God in all things. Only, all is directed to the one aim, directed towards God, filled with the idea of the divine, infinite, universal existence so that the outward-going, sensuous, pragmatistical preoccupation of the lower knowledge with phenomena and forms is replaced by the one divine preoccupation. After attainment the same character remains. The Yogin continues to know and see God in the finite and be a channel of God-consciousness and God-action in the world; therefore the knowledge of the world and the enlarging and uplifting of all that appertains to life comes within his scope. Only, in all he sees God, sees the supreme reality, and his motive of work is to help mankind towards the knowledge of God and the possession of the supreme reality. He sees God through the data of science, God through the conclusions of philosophy, God through the forms of Beauty and the forms of Good, God in all the activities of life, God in the past of the world and its effects, in the present and its tendencies, in the future and its great progression. Into any or all of these he can bring his illumined vision and his liberated power of the spirit. The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher; the higher illumines for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE DIVINE BIRTH AND DIVINE WORKS

( 3 )

The work for which the Avatar descends has like his birth a double sense and a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which Nature acts ; it has an inward side of the divine force of the Godward consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race, so that it may receive new forms of the revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed and enriched in its power of upward self-unfolding. The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in humanity is too often tempted to suppose. Action and event have no value in themselves, but only take their value from the force which they represent and the idea which they symbolise and which the force is there to serve.

The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its source and real

meaning a crisis in the consciousness of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development. For this action of change a divine force is needed ; but the force varies always according to the power of consciousness which it embodies ; hence the necessity of a divine consciousness manifesting in the mind and soul of humanity. Where, indeed, the change is mainly intellectual and practical, the intervention of the Avatar is not needed ; there is a great uplifting of consciousness, a great manifestation of power in which men are for the time being exalted above their normal selves, and this surge of consciousness and power finds its wave-crests in certain exceptional individuals, *vibhūtis*, whose action leading the general action is sufficient for the change intended. The Reformation in Europe and the French Revolution were crises of this character ; they were not great spiritual events, but intellectual and practical changes, one in religions, the other in social and political ideas, forms and motives, and the modification of the general consciousness brought about was a mental and dynamic, but not a spiritual modification. But when the crisis has a spiritual seed or intention, then a complete or a partial manifestation of the God-consciousness in a human mind and soul comes as its originator or leader. That is the Avatar.

The outward action of the Avatar is described in the Gita as the restoration of the Dharma ; when from age to age the Dharma fades, languishes, loses force and its opposite arises, strong and oppressive, then the Avatar comes and raises it again to power ; and as these things in idea are always represented by things in action and by human beings who obey their impulsion, his mission is, in its most human and outward terms, to deliver the seekers of the Dharma who are oppressed by the reign of the reactionary darkness and destroy the wrongdoers who seek to maintain the denial of the Dharma. But the



language used can easily be given a poor and insufficient connotation which would deprive Avatarhood of all its spiritual depth of meaning. Dharma is a word which has an ethical and practical, a natural and philosophical and a religious and spiritual significance, and it may be used in any of these senses exclusive of the others, in a purely ethical, a purely philosophical or a purely religious sense. Ethically it means the law of righteousness, the ethical rule, or in a still more outward and practical significance social and political justice, or even simply the observation of the social law. If used in this sense we shall have to understand that when unrighteousness, injustice and oppression prevail, the Avatar descends to deliver the good and destroy the wicked, to break down injustice and oppression and restore the ethical balance of mankind.

Thus the popular and mythical account of the Krishna avatar is that the unrighteousness of the Kurus as incarnated in Duryodhana and his brothers became so great a burden to the earth that she had to call upon God to descend and lighten her load ; accordingly Vishnu incarnated as Krishna, delivered the oppressed Pandavas and destroyed the unjust Kauravas. A similar account is given of the descent of the previous Vishnu avatars, of Rama to destroy the unrighteous oppression of Ravana, Parshurama to destroy the unrighteous license of the military and princely caste, the Kshatriyas, of the dwarf Vamana to destroy the rule of the Titan Bali. But obviously the purely practical, ethical or social and political mission of the Avatar which is thus thrown into popular and mythical form, does not give a right account of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. It does not cover its spiritual sense, and if this outward utility were all, we should have to exclude Buddha and Christ whose mission was not at all to destroy evildoers and deliver the good, but to bring to all mankind a new spiritual message and a new law of divine growth and spiritual realisation. On the

other hand, if we give to the word dharma only its religious sense, in which it means a law of religious and spiritual life, we shall indeed get to the kernel of the matter, but we shall be in danger of excluding a most important part of the work done by the Avatar. Always we see in the history of the divine incarnations the double work, and inevitably, because the Avatar takes up the workings of God in human life, the divine Will and Wisdom in the world, and that always fulfils itself externally as well as internally, by inner progress in the soul and by an outer change in the life.

The Avatar may descend as a great spiritual teacher and saviour, the Christ, the Buddha, but always his work leads, after he has finished his earthly manifestation, to a profound and powerful change not only in the ethical, but in the social and outward life and ideals of the race. He may, on the other hand, descend as an incarnation of the divine life, the divine personality and power in its characteristic action, for a mission ostensibly social, ethical and political, as is represented in the story of Rama or Krishna; but always then this descent becomes in the soul of the race a permanent power for the inner living and the spiritual rebirth. It is indeed curious to note that the permanent, vital, universal effect of Buddhism and Christianity has been the force of their ethical, social and practical ideals and influence even on the men and the ages which have rejected their religious and spiritual beliefs, forms and disciplines; later Hinduism, which rejected Buddha, his *saugha* and his *dharma*, bears the ineffaceable imprint of the ethical influence of Buddhism and its effect on the ideas and the life of the race, while in modern Europe, Christian only in name, humanitarianism is the translation into the ethical and social sphere and the aspiration to liberty, equality and fraternity the translation into the social and political sphere of the spiritual truths of Christianity, the latter especially being effected by men who aggressively

rejected the Christian religion and spiritual discipline and by an age which in its intellectual effort of emancipation tried to get rid of Christianity as a creed. On the other hand the life of Rama and Krishna belongs to the prehistoric past which has come down only in poetry and legend and may even be regarded as myths ; but it is quite immaterial whether we regard them as myths or historical facts, because their permanent truth and value lie in their persistence as a spiritual form, presence, influence in the inner consciousness of the race and the life of the human soul. Avatarhood is a fact of divine life and consciousness which may realise itself in an outward action, but must persist, when that action is over and has done its work, in a spiritual presence and influence; or may realise itself in a spiritual influence and teaching, but must then have its permanent effect, even when the new religion or discipline is exhausted, in the thought, temperament and outward life of mankind.

We must then, in order to understand the Gita's description of the work of the Avatar, take the idea of the Dharma in its fullest, deepest and largest conception, as the inner and the outer law by which the divine Will and Wisdom work out the spiritual evolution of mankind and its circumstances and results in the life of the race. Dharma in the Indian conception is not merely the good, the right, morality and justice, ethics ; it is the whole government of all the relations of man with other beings, with Nature, with God, considered from the point of view of a divine principle working itself out in forms and laws of action, forms of the inner and the outer life, orderings of relations of every kind in the world. Dharma\* is both that which we hold to and that which holds together our inner and outer activities. In its primary sense it means a

\*The word means " holding " from the root *dhri*, to hold.

fundamental law of our nature which secretly conditions all our activities, and in this sense each being, type, species, individual, group has its own dharma. Secondly, there is the divine nature which has to develop and manifest in us, and in this sense dharma is the law of the inner workings by which that grows in our being. Thirdly, there is the law by which we govern our outgoing thought and action and our relations with each other so as to help best both our own growth and that of the human race towards the divine ideal.

Dharma is generally spoken of as something eternal and unchanging, and so it is in the fundamental principle, in the ideal, but in its forms it is continually changing and evolving, because man does not already possess the ideal or live in it, but aspires more or less perfectly towards it, is growing towards its knowledge and practice. And in this growth dharma is all that helps us to grow into the divine purity, largeness, light, freedom, power, strength, joy, love, good, unity, beauty, and against it stands its shadow and denial, all that resists its growth and has not undergone its law, all that has not yielded up and does not will to yield up its secret of divine values, but presents a front of perversion and contradiction, of impurity, narrowness, bondage, darkness, weakness, vileness, discord and suffering and division, and the hideous and the crude, all that man has to leave behind in his progress. This is the *adharma*, not-dharma, which strives with and seeks to overcome the dharma, to draw backward and downward, the reactionary force which makes for evil, ignorance and darkness. Between the two there is perpetual battle and struggle, oscillation of victory and defeat in which sometimes the upward and sometimes the downward forces prevail. This has been typified in the Vedic image of the struggle between the divine and the Titanic powers, the sons of the Light and the undivided Infinity and the children of the Darkness and Division,

in Zoroastrianism by Ahuramazda and Ahriman, and in later religions in the contest between God and his angels and Satan or Iblis and his demons for the possession of human life and the human soul.

It is these things that condition and determine the work of the Avatar. In the Buddhist formula the disciple takes refuge from all that opposes his liberation in three powers, the *dharma*, the *sangha*, the Buddha. So in Christianity we have the law of Christian living, the Church and the Christ. These three are always the necessary elements of the work of the Avatar. He gives a *dharma*, a law of self-discipline by which to grow out of the lower into the higher life and which necessarily includes a rule of action and of relations with our fellow-men and other beings, endeavour in the eightfold path or the law of faith, love and purity or any other such revelation of the nature of the divine in life. Then because every tendency in man has its collective as well as its individual aspect, because those who follow one way are naturally drawn together into spiritual companionship and unity, he establishes the *sangha*, the fellowship and union of those whom his personality and his teaching unite. In Vaishnavism there is the same trio, *bhāgavat*, *bhakta*, *bhagavān*,—the *bhāgavat*, which is the law of the Vaishnava dispensation of adoration and love, the *bhakta* representing the fellowship of those in whom that law is manifest, *bhagavān*, the divine Lover and Beloved in whose being and nature the divine law of love is founded and fulfils itself. The Avatar represents this third element, the divine personality, nature and being who is the soul of the *dharma* and the *sangha*, informs them with himself, keeps them living and draws men towards the felicity and the liberation.

In the teaching of the Gita, which is more catholic and complex than other specialised teachings and disciplines, these things assume a larger meaning. For the

unity here is the all-embracing Vedantic unity by which the soul sees all in itself and itself in all and makes itself one with all beings. The dharma is therefore the taking up of all human relations into a higher divine meaning ; starting from the established ethical, social and religious rule which binds together the whole community in which the God-seeker lives, it lifts it up by informing it with the Brahmic consciousness ; the law it gives is the law of oneness, of equality, of liberated, desireless, God-governed action, of God-knowledge and self-knowledge enlightening and drawing to itself all the nature and all the action, drawing it towards divine being and divine consciousness, and of God-love as the supreme power and crown of the knowledge and the action. The idea of companionship and mutual aid in God-love and God-seeking which is at the basis of the idea of the *sangha* or divine fellowship, is brought in when the Gita speaks of the seeking of God through love and adoration, but the real *sangha* of this teaching is all humanity. The whole world is moving towards this dharma, each man according to his capacity,—“ it is my path that men follow in every way,”—and the God-seeker, making himself one with all, making their joy and sorrow and all their life his own, the liberated made already one self with all beings, lives in the life of humanity, lives for the one Self in humanity, for God in all beings, acts for *lokasangraha*, for the maintaining of all in their dharma and the dharma, for the maintenance of their growth in all its stages and in all its paths towards the Divine. For the Avatar here, though he is manifest in the name and form of Krishna, lays no stress on this one form of his human birth, but on that which it represents, the Divine, the Purushottama, of whom all Avatars are the human births, of whom all forms and names of the Godhead worshipped by men are the figures. The way declared by Krishna here is indeed announced as the way by which man can reach the real knowledge and the

real liberation, but it is one that is inclusive of all paths and not exclusive. For the Divine takes up into his universality all Avatars and all teachings and all dharmas.

The Gita lays stress upon the struggle of which the world is the theatre, in its two aspects, the inner struggle and the outer battle. In the inner struggle the enemies are within, in the individual, and the slaying of desire, ignorance, egoism is the victory. But there is an outer struggle between the powers of the Dharma and the Adharma in the human collectivity. The former is supported by the divine, the godlike nature in man, and by those who represent it or strive to realise it in human life, the latter by the Titanic or demoniac, the Asuric and Rakshasic nature whose head is a violent egoism, and by those who represent and strive to satisfy it. This is the war of the Gods and Titans, the symbol of which the old Indian literature is full, the struggle of the Mahabharata of which Krishna is the central figure being often represented in that image; the Pandavas who fight for the establishment of the kingdom of the Dharma, are the sons of the Gods, their powers in human form, their adversaries are incarnations of the Titanic powers, they are Asuras. This outer struggle too the Avatar comes to aid, directly or indirectly, to destroy the reign of the Asuras, the evildoers, and in them depress the power they represent and to restore the oppressed ideals of the Dharma. He comes to bring nearer the kingdom of heaven on earth in the collectivity as well as to build the kingdom of heaven within in the individual human soul.

The inner fruit of the Avatar's coming is gained by those who learn from it the true nature of the divine birth and the divine works and who by growing full of him in their consciousness and taking refuge in him with their whole being, *manmayâ mām upâśritâh*, purified by the realising force of their knowledge and delivered from the lower nature, attain to the divine being and divine

nature, *madbhāvam*. The Avatar comes to reveal the divine nature in man above this lower nature and to show what are the divine works, free, unegoistic, disinterested, impersonal, universal, full of the divine light, the divine power and the divine love. He comes as the divine personality which shall fill the consciousness of the human being and replace the limited egoistic personality, so that it shall be liberated out of ego into infinity and universality, out of birth into immortality. He comes as the divine power and love which calls men to itself, so that they may take refuge in that and no longer in the insufficiency of their human wills and the strife of their human fear, wrath and passion, and liberated from all this unquiet and suffering may live in the calm and bliss of the Divine.\* Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he comes; for in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man. *Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāns tathaira bhajāmyaham*.

---

\* *Jaṇma karma cha me divyam evam yo veti tattvataḥ.  
Tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjāma naiti mām eti so'jṇma.  
Vitarāgalbhayakrodhā manmayā mām upācṛitāḥ.  
Bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvam āgataḥ.*



# The Eternal Wisdom

---

## BOOK II

### III

#### THE CONQUEST OF SELF

##### TO RENOUNCE THE FRUIT OF WORKS

- 1     Personal success ought never to be considered the aim of existence.
- 2     One does not need to hope in order to act, nor to
- 3     succeed in order to persevere.—The superior man perseveres in the middle path. Even though he remains unknown and the world esteems him not, he feels no regret. The sage alone is capable of such an action.
- 4     Poor souls are they whose work is for a reward.—
- 5     Thou hast a right only to work, but never to its fruits.
- 6     It is impossible for man who has a body to abstain absolutely from all action, but whoever renounces its fruits, is the man of true renunciation.
- 7     He who sees that in inaction there is an act and that in works there can be freedom from the act, is

---

1) Bacon.—2) William the Silent.—3) Tsang-Yung.—4) Bhagavad Gita. 2.49.—5) id. 2.47.—6) id. 18.11.—7) id. 4.18,20.—

the wise among men...When a man has given up the fruit of his works and is eternally content and without dependence upon things, then though occupied in works, it is not he that is doing any act.

- 8 When anyone does good without troubling himself for the result, ambition and malevolence pass  
9 quickly away from him.—When the man who does good, ceases to concern himself with the result of his act, ambition and wrath are extinguished within  
10 him.—The act done under right rule, with detachment, without liking or dislike, by the man who grasps not at the fruit, that is a work of light.
- 11 A one-minded pursuit of the inner joys kills ambition.
- 12 The Master has said, "To pore over mysterious things and do miracles that I may be cited with honour in future times, this is what I will not do."
-

# Hymns of the Atris

---

## A HYMN TO SAVITRI

[ The Rishi hymns the Sun-God as the source of divine knowledge and the creator of the inner worlds. To him, the Seer, the seekers of light yoke their mind and thoughts ; he, the one knower of all forms of knowledge, is the one supreme ordainer of the sacrifice. He assumes all forms as the robes of his being and his creative sight and creates the supreme good and happiness for the two forms of life in the worlds. He manifests the heavenly world, shining in the path of the dawn of divine knowledge ; in that path the other godheads follow him and it is his greatness of light that they make the goal of all their energies. He has measured out for us our earthly worlds by his power and greatness : but it is in the three worlds of light that he attains to his real greatness of manifestation in the rays of the divine sun ; then he encompasses the night of our darkness with his being and his light and becomes Mitra who by his laws produces the luminous harmony of our higher and lower worlds. Of all our creation he is the one author, and by his forward marches he is its increaser until the whole world of our becoming grows full of his illumination. ]

1. The illumined yoke their mind and they yoke their thoughts to the illumined godhead to the vast, to the luminous in consciousness ; the one knower

of all manifestation of knowledge, he alone orders the things of the sacrifice. Great is the praise of Savitri, the creating godhead.

2. All forms are robes the Seer puts on that he may create the good and bliss for the double and the quadruple 1 creature. Savitri describes by his light our heavenly world; supreme is he and desirable, wide is the light of his shining in the march of the Dawn.

3. And in that march all the other gods in their might follow after the greatness of this godhead. This is that bright god Savitri who by his power and greatness has measured out our earthly worlds of light.

4. But also thou goest, O Savitri, to the three shining worlds of heaven and thou art made manifest by the rays of the Sun, and thou encirclest on both sides the Night, and thou becomest Mitra, O god, with his settled laws of Truth.

5. And thou alone hast power for the creation and thou becomest the Increaser. O god, by thy marchings in thy path. and thou illuminest all this world of the becoming. Çyâvâçva, O Savitri, has found the affirmation of thy godhead.

---

1. Literally, two-footed and four-footed, but *pad* also means the step, the principle on which the soul founds itself. The esoteric meaning is four-principled, those who dwell in the fourfold principle of the lower world, and two-principled, those who dwell in the double principle of the divine and the human.

# **The Psychology of Social Development**

---

## **XVII**

Since the infinite, the absolute, the universal, the one, in a word the Divine is the secret goal and aim of all being and action and therefore of the whole development of the individual and the collectivity in all its parts and all its activities, reason cannot be the last and highest guide ; culture, as it is understood ordinarily, cannot be the directing light or find out the regulating and harmonising principle of all our life and action. For reason stops short of the Divine and only compromises with the problems of life, and culture in order to attain it must become spiritual culture, something much more than an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and practical training. Where then are we to find the directing light and the regulating and harmonising principle ? The first answer which will suggest itself and which has been given by the Asiatic mind, is that we shall find it immediately in religion ; and this seems a reasonable and at first sight a satisfying answer, for religion is that instinct, idea, activity, discipline in man which aims directly at the Divine, while all the rest seem to aim at it only indirectly and reach it with difficulty after much wandering and stumbling in the pursuit

of the outward and imperfect appearances of things. To make all life religion and to govern all activities by the religious idea would seem to be the right way to the development of the ideal individual and ideal society and the lifting of the whole life of man into the Divine.

This preeminence of religion, this overshadowing of all the other instincts and fundamental ideas by the religious instinct and the religious idea is, we may note, not peculiar to Asiatic civilisations, but has always been more or less the normal state of the human mind and of human societies, except in certain comparatively brief periods of its history, in one of which we find ourselves today, are half turning indeed to emerge from it, but have not yet emerged. We must suppose then that in this leading, this predominant part assigned to religion by the normal human collectivity there is some great need and truth of our natural being to which we must always after however long an infidelity return. On the other hand, we must recognise that often in times of great activity, of high aspiration, of deep sowing, of rich fruit-bearing, such as the modern age with all its faults and errors has been, a time especially when humanity has got rid of much that was cruel, evil, ignorant, dark, odious, not by the power of religion, but by the power of the awakened intelligence and of human idealism and sympathy, this predominance of religion has been violently attacked and rejected by that portion of humanity which was for that time the standard-bearer of human thought and progress, Europe after the Renaissance, modern Europe.

This revolt in its extreme form tried to destroy religion altogether, boasted indeed of having killed the religious instinct in man,—a vain and ignorant boast, as we now see, for the religious instinct in man is most of all the one instinct in him that cannot be killed, it only changes its form. In its more moderate forms the revolt put religion aside into a corner of the soul by itself and banished its in-

termiscence in the intellectual, aesthetic, practical life and even in the ethical ; and it did this on the ground that the intermixture of religion in science, thought, politics, society, life in general had been and must be a force for retardation, superstition, oppression, ignorance. The religionist may say that this was all error and atheistic perversity, or he may say that a religious retardation, a pious ignorance, a contented static condition or even an orderly stagnation full of holy thoughts of the beyond is much better than a continuous endeavour after greater knowledge, greater mastery, more happiness, joy, light upon this transient earth. But the catholic thinker cannot accept such a plea ; he is obliged to see that so long as man has not realised the divine and the ideal in his life, progress and not unmovable status is the necessary and desirable law of his life, not indeed any breathless rush after novelties, but a seeking after a greater and greater truth of the spirit, the thought and the life not only in the individual, but in the collectivity, in the spirit, ideals, temperament, make of the society. And he is obliged too to see that the indictment against religion, not in its conclusion, but in its premiss had something, had even much to justify it,—not that religion in itself must be, but that historically and as a matter of fact the accredited religions and their hierarchs and exponents have too often been a force for retardation, have too often thrown their weight on the side of darkness, oppression and ignorance, and that it has needed a denial, a revolt of the oppressed human mind and heart to correct these errors and set religion right. And why should this have been if religion is the true and sufficient guide and regulator of all human activities and the whole of human life ?

We need not follow the rationalistic or atheistic mind through all its aggressive indictment of religion. We need not for instance lay excessive stress on the superstitions, aberrations, violences, crimes even, which Churches and

cults and creeds have favoured, admitted, sanctioned, supported or exploited for their own benefit, the mere hostile enumeration of which might lead one to echo the cry of the atheistic Roman poet, "To such a mass of ills has religion been able to persuade mankind." As well might one cite the crimes and errors which have been committed in the name of liberty as a sufficient condemnation of the ideal of liberty. But we have to note the fact that such a thing was possible and to find its explanation. We cannot ignore for instance the blood-stained and fiery track which formal, external Christianity has left furrowed across the mediaeval history of Europe almost from the days of Constantine, its first hour of secular triumph, down to very recent times, or the sanguinary comment which such an institution as the Inquisition affords on the claim of religion to be the directing light and regulating power in ethics and society, or religious wars and wide-spread State persecutions on its claim to guide the political life of mankind. But we must observe the root of this evil, which is not in true religion itself, but in our ignorant human confusion of religion with a particular creed, sect, cult, religious society or church. So strong is the human tendency to this error that even the old tolerant Paganism slew Socrates in the name of religion and morality, feebly persecuted non-national religions like the cult of Isis or the cult of Mithra and more vigorously what it conceived to be the subversive and anti-social religion of the early Christians ; and even in still more fundamentally tolerant Hinduism it led to the mutual hatred and occasional persecution of Buddhist, Jain, Shaiva, Vaishnava.

The whole root of the historical insufficiency of religion as a guide and control of human society lies there. Churches and creeds have, for example, stood violently in the way of philosophy and science, burned a Giordano Bruno, imprisoned a Galileo, and so generally misconducted themselves in this matter that philosophy and



science had in self-defence to turn upon Religion and rend her to pieces in order to get a free field for their legitimate development ; and this because men had chosen to think that religion was bound up with certain fixed intellectual conceptions about God and the world which could not stand scrutiny, and therefore scrutiny had to be put down by fire and sword ; scientific and philosophical truth had to be denied in order that religious error might survive. We see too a narrow religious spirit often oppressing and impoverishing the joy and beauty of life, either from an intolerant asceticism or, as the Puritans attempted it, because they could not see that a religious austerity was not the whole of religion, though it might be an important side of it, was not the sole ethico-religious approach to God, since love, charity, gentleness, tolerance, kindness are also and even more divine, and they forgot or never knew that God is love and beauty as well as purity. In politics religion has often thrown itself on the side of power and resisted the coming of larger political ideals, because it was itself in the form of a Church supported by power and because it confused religion with the Church, or because it stood for a false theocracy, forgetting that true theocracy is the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of a Pope, a priesthood or a sacerdotal class. So too it has often supported a rigid and outworn social system, because it thought its own life bound up with social forms with which it happened to have been associated during a long portion of its own history, and erroneously concluded that even a necessary change there would be a violation of religion and a danger to its existence ; as if so mighty and inward a thing as the religious spirit in man could be destroyed by so small a thing as the change of a social form or so outward a thing as a social readjustment ! This error in its many forms has been the great weakness of religion as practised in the past and the opportunity and justification for the revolt

of the intelligence, the aesthetic sense, the social and political idealism, even the ethical spirit of the human being against what should have been its own highest tendency and law.

Here then lies one secret of the divergence between the ancient and the modern, the Eastern and Western ideal, and here also one clue to their reconciliation. Both rest upon a certain strong justification and their quarrel is due to a misunderstanding. It is true that religion should be the dominant thing in life, its light and law, but religion as it should be and is in its inner nature, its fundamental law of being, a seeking after God, the cult of spirituality; on the other hand it is true that religion when it identifies itself only with a creed, a cult, a Church, a system of ceremonial forms, may well become a retarding force and that it may become a necessity for the human spirit to reject its control over the varied activities of life. There are two aspects of religion, true religion and religionism. True religion is spiritual religion, that which seeks to live in the spirit, in what is beyond the intellect, beyond the aesthetic and ethical and practical being of man, and to inform and govern these members of our being by the light and law of the spirit. Religionism on the contrary entrenches itself in some narrow pietistic exaltation of the lower members, lays therefore exclusive stress on intellectual dogmas, forms and ceremonies, on some fixed and inflexible moral code, on some religio-political or religio-social system. Not that these things are negligible or unworthy or unnecessary, or that spiritual religion disdains their aid; on the contrary, they are needed, because the lower members have to be exalted and raised before they can be spiritualised, before they can feel the spirit and obey its law. But these things are aids and supports, not the essence. They have to be offered to man and used by him, but not to be imposed on him as his sole law by a forced and inflexible domination. In the

use of them toleration and free permission of variation is the first rule which should be observed. The spiritual essence of religion is alone the one thing supremely needful to which we have always to hold.

But here comes in an ambiguity which brings in a deeper source of divergence. For by spirituality religion seems often to mean something remote from earthly life, different from it, hostile to it. It seems to declare the pursuit of earthly life and the hopes of man on earth a thing incompatible with the spiritual life or the hope of man in heaven. The spirit then becomes something aloof which man can only reach by throwing away the life of his lower members, either by abandoning it after a certain point, when it has served its purpose, or by persistently discouraging, mortifying and killing it. If that be the true sense of religion, then obviously religion has no positive message for human society in the proper field of social effort, hope and aspiration or for any of the lower members of our being. For each principle of our life seeks naturally for perfection in its own sphere and, if it is to obey a higher power, it must be because that power gives it a greater perfection and a fuller satisfaction even in its own field. But if perfectibility is denied to it and therefore the aspiration to perfection taken away by the spiritual urge, then it must either lose faith in itself and power to pursue the natural expansion of its energies and activities or it must reject the call of the spirit in order to follow its own bent and law, its own *dharma*. This quarrel between earth and heaven, between the spirit and its members becomes still more sterilising, if spirituality takes the form of a religion of sorrow and suffering and austere mortification and the vanity of things; in its exaggeration it leads to such nightmares of the soul as that terrible gloom and hopelessness of the Middle Ages at their worst, when the one hope of mankind seemed to be in the approaching and expected end of the

world, an inevitable and desirable *pralaya*. But even in less pronounced and intolerant forms of this pessimistic attitude with regard to the world, it becomes a force for the discouragement of life and cannot, therefore, be a true law and guide for life. All pessimism is to that extent a denial of the Spirit, of its fullness and power, an impatience with the ways of God in the world, an insufficient faith in the divine wisdom and power which created the world and guides it. It admits a wrong notion about that wisdom and power and therefore cannot itself be the supreme wisdom and power of the spirit to which the world can look for guidance and for the uplifting of its whole life towards the Divine.

The Western recoil from religion, that minimising of its claim and insistence by which Europe progressed from the mediaeval religious attitude through the Renaissance and the Reformation to the modern rationalistic attitude which makes the ordinary earthly life its one preoccupation and seeks to fulfil it by the law of the lower members divorced from all spiritual seeking, is the other extreme, the opposite swing of the pendulum. It is an error because perfection cannot be found in such a limitation and restriction, which denies the complete law of human existence and its deepest urge and most secret impulse. Only by the light and power of the highest can the lower be guided, uplifted and fulfilled. The lower life of man is in form undivine, though in it there is the secret of the divine, and it can only be divinised by finding the higher law and the spiritual illumination. On the other hand the impatience which flees from life or discourages its growth because it is at present undivine and is not in harmony with the spiritual life, is also an error. The monk, the more ascetic may indeed find by it his own individual and peculiar salvation, as the materialist may find the appropriate rewards of his energy and concentrated seeking ; but he cannot be the true guide of mankind and its law-

giver. For his whole attitude implies a fear, an aversion, a distrust of life and its aspirations, and one cannot wisely guide that with which one is entirely out of sympathy, that which one wishes to minimise and discourage. The pure ascetic spirit directing life and human society can only prepare it to be a means for denying and getting away from itself ; it may tolerate the lower activities, but only with a view to persuading them to minimise and finally cease from their own action. The spiritual man who can guide human life towards its perfection is typified in the ancient Indian idea of the Rishi, who living the life of man has found the word of the supra-intellectual, supra-mental, spiritual truth. He has risen above these lower limitations and can view all things from above, but also he is in sympathy with their effort and can view them from within ; he has the complete knowledge and the higher knowledge. Therefore he can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely, because like the Divine he is in the life of the world and yet above it.

In spirituality, then, understood in this sense we must seek for the directing light and the harmonising law, and in religion in proportion as it identifies itself with this spirituality. So long as it falls short of this, it is one human activity and power among others, though the most important and the most powerful, and cannot wholly guide the others. If it seeks always to fix them into the limits of a creed, an unchangeable law, a particular system, it must be prepared to see them revolting from its control ; for although they may accept this impress for a time and greatly profit by it, in the end they must move by the law of their being towards a freer scope and activity. Spirituality respects the freedom of the human soul, because it is itself fulfilled by freedom ; and the deepest meaning of freedom is the power to expand and grow towards perfection by the law of one's own nature, one's *dharma*. This liberty it will give to all the fundamental parts of

our being. It will give that freedom to philosophy and science which ancient Indian religion gave,—freedom even to deny the spirit, if they will,—as a result of which philosophy and science never found in ancient India the necessity of divorcing themselves from religion, but grew into it and under its light. It will give the same freedom to man's seeking for political and social perfection and to all his other powers and aspirations. Only it will seek to illuminate them so that they may grow into the light and law of the spirit, not by suppression and restriction, but by expansion and a many-sided finding of their greatest, highest and deepest potentialities. For all these are potentialities of the spirit.

---

# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII

We have constantly to keep in view the fundamental principles and realities of life if we are not to be betrayed by the arbitrary rule of the reason, the rigorous and limiting idea into experiments which, however captivating to a unitarian and symmetrical thought, may well destroy the vigour and impoverish the roots of life. For a thing may be quite perfect and satisfying to the system of the logical reason and yet ignore the truth of life and the living needs of the race. Unity is an idea which is not at all arbitrary or unreal ; for unity is the very basis of existence, and that which is secretly at the basis, the evolving spirit in Nature is moved to realise consciously at the top of its evolution. Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise. But uniformity is not the law of life ; life exists by diversity : it insists that every group, every being shall be, even while one with all the rest in its universality, yet by some principle or ordered detail of variation unique. So too the over-centralisation which is the condition of a working uniformity, is not the healthy method of life. Order is indeed the law of life, but not an artificial regulation ; for sound order is that which comes from within as the result of the nature finding itself, finding its own law and the law of its relations with others ; therefore the truest and soundest order is

that which is founded on the greatest liberty ; for liberty is at once the condition of vigorous variation and the condition of self-finding. Nature secures variation by division into groups, and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore, the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural association of free individuals. This is an ideal which it is certainly impossible to realise under present conditions or perhaps in any near future of humanity ; but it is an ideal which we ought to keep in view, for the more we can approximate to it, the more we can be sure of being on the right road. The artificiality of much in human life is the cause of its most deep-seated maladies.

The utility, the necessity of natural groupings may be seen if we consider the purpose and functioning of one great principle of division in Nature, that of language. The seeking for a common language for all mankind was very strong at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century and gave rise to several experiments, none of which got to any vital permanence. Now whatever may be the need of a common medium of communication for mankind and however it may be served by the general use either of an artificial and conventional language or of some natural tongue, as Latin, and later on to a slight extent French, was for some time the common cultural tongue of intercourse between the European nations or Sanskrit for the Indian peoples, no unification of language which destroyed or overshadowed, dwarfed and discouraged the large and free use of the varying natural languages of humanity, could fail to be detrimental to the interests of human life and progress. The legend of the Tower of Babel speaks of the diversity of tongues as a curse laid on the race ; but whatever its disadvantages, and they tend more and more to be minimised by the growth of



civilisation and increasing intercourse, it has been rather a blessing than a curse, a gift to mankind rather than a disability. The purposeless exaggeration of anything is always an evil, and an excessive pullulation of varying tongues serving no purpose in the expression of a real diversity of spirit and culture is certainly a stumbling-block rather than a help; but this, though it existed in the past, is not now a possibility of the future: the tendency is rather the other way. In former times, too, diversity of language created a barrier to knowledge and sympathy, was often made the pretext even of an antipathy, tended to divide too rigidly, to keep up both a passive want of understanding and a fruitful crop of active misunderstandings. But this was a necessary evil of a particular stage of growth, an exaggeration of the necessity for the vigorous development of strongly individualised group-souls in humanity. These disadvantages have not yet been abolished, but with closer intercourse and the growing desire of men and nations for the knowledge of each other's thought and spirit and personality, they have diminished, tend to diminish more and more, and there is no reason why in the end they should not become inoperative.

Diversity of language serves two important ends of the human spirit, one of unification, the other of variation. A language helps to bring those who speak it into a certain large unity of growing thought, formed temperament, ripening spirit. It is an intellectual, aesthetic, mental bond which tempers division where that exists, strengthens unity where that has been achieved. Especially it gives self-consciousness to national or racial unity and creates the bond of a common self-expression and record of achievement. On the other hand it is a means, the most powerful of all perhaps, of national differentiation, not a barren principle of division merely, but a fruitful and helpful differentiation. For each language is the sign and power

of the soul of the people which naturally speaks it ; each develops therefore its own peculiar spirit, thought-temperament, way of dealing with life and knowledge and experience : it receives the thought, the life-experience, the spiritual impact of other nations, but it transforms them into something new of its own and by that power of transmutation enriches the life of humanity by its borrowings instead of merely repeating what had been gained elsewhere. Therefore it is of the utmost value to a nation, a human group-soul, to preserve its language and make of it a strong and living cultural instrument ; a nation, race or people which loses its language cannot live its whole life or its real life. And here the advantage to the national life is at the same time an advantage for the general life of humanity.

What a distinct human group loses by not possessing a separate tongue of its own or by losing the one it had, can be seen by the examples of the British colonies, the United States of America and Ireland. The colonies are really separate peoples in the psychological sense, though not separate nations. English, for the most part or at the lowest in great part, in their origin and political and social sympathy, they are yet not replicas of England, but have already a temperament, a character, a bent of their own ; but this can only be shown in the more outward and mechanical parts of life and there in no great, effective and fruitful fashion. The British colonies do not count in the culture of the world, because they have no culture, because by the fact of their speech they are and must be mere provinces of England, and whatever peculiarities they may develop in their mental life tend to create a type of provincialism and not a central intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual life of their own with its distinct importance for humanity. For the same reason the whole of America in spite of its independent political and economical being has tended to be culturally a province of

Europe, the south and centre by its dependence on the Spanish, the north by its dependence on the English language. The life of the United States alone tends and strives to become a great and separate cultural existence, but its success is not commensurate with its power. Culturally it is still to a great extent a province of England ; neither its literature, in spite of two or three great names, nor its art, its thought, nor anything else on the higher levels of the mind, has been able to arrive at a vigorous and independent maturity. And this because its instrument of self-expression, the language which the national mind ought to shape and be in turn shaped by it, was shaped and must continue to be shaped by another country with a different mentality and must there find its centre and its law of development. In old times America would have developed the English language according to its own needs until it became a new speech, as the Latinised nations dealt with Latin, and so arrived at a characteristic instrument of self-expression ; but under modern conditions this is not possible.

Ireland had its own tongue when it had its own free nationality and culture ; its loss was a loss to humanity as well as to the nation. For what might not this Celtic race with its profound spirituality and quick intelligence and delicate imagination, which did so much in the beginning for European culture and religion, have given to the world through all these centuries under natural conditions ? But the forcible imposition of a foreign tongue and the turning of a nation into a province left Ireland for so many centuries mute and culturally stagnant, a dead force in the life of Europe ; nor can we consider this loss compensated for by any indirect influence of the race upon English culture or the few direct contributions made by gifted Irishman forced to pour their natural genius into a foreign mould of thought. Even now when Ireland is striving to recover her free soul and give it a voice, she is

hampered by having to use a tongue which does not naturally express her spirit and peculiar bent. In time she may conquer the obstacle, make this tongue her own, force it to express her, but it will be long, if ever, before she can do it with the same richness, force and unfettered individuality as she would have done in her own Gaelic speech. Modern India is another striking example. Nothing has stood more in the way of rapid progress in India, of her finding and developing herself under modern conditions than the long overshadowing of the Indian tongues as cultural instruments by the English language. It is significant that the one sub-nation in India which from the first refused, as much as it could, to undergo this yoke, devoted itself to the development of its language, made that for long its principal preoccupation, gave to it its most original minds and most living energies, getting through everything else perfunctorily, neglecting commerce, doing politics as an intellectual and oratorical pastime,—that it is Bengal which first recovered its soul, respiritualised itself, forced the whole world to hear of its great spiritual personalities, gave it the first modern Indian poet and Indian scientist of world-wide fame and achievement, first made India begin to count again in the culture of the world, first, as a reward in the outer life, arrived at a vital political consciousness and a living political movement not imitative and derivative in its spirit and its central ideal. For so much does language count in the life of a nation ; for so much does it count to the advantage of humanity at large that its group-souls should preserve and develop and use with a vigorous group individuality their natural instrument of expression.

A common language makes for unity ; and therefore it might be said that the unity of the human race demands unity of language, and that the advantages of diversity must be foregone for this greater good, however serious the temporary sacrifice. But it makes for a real, fruitful, living

unity, only when it is the natural expression of the race or has been made so by development from within. The history of universal tongues spoken by peoples to whom they were not natural, is not encouraging ; they tend to become dead tongues, sterilising so long as they keep hold, fruitful only when they are broken up again into new derivative languages or have departed leaving the old speech, where that has persisted, to revive with this new stamp and influence upon it. Latin after its first century of general domination in the West became a dead thing, impotent for creation, generated no new culture in the nations speaking it, could not be given a real new life even by so great a force as Christianity. The times during which it was the instrument of European thought, were precisely those in which that thought was heaviest, most traditional and least fruitful. A rapid and vigorous new life only grew up when the languages which appeared out of the detritus of dying Latin or the old languages which had not been lost, took its place as the complete instruments of national culture. For it is not enough that the natural language should be spoken by the people ; it must be the expression of its higher life and thought. A language surviving only as a patois or a provincial tongue like Welsh after the English conquest, Breton or Provençal in France, Czech in Austria or Ruthenian and Lithuanian in Russia languishes, becomes sterile and does not serve all the true purpose of survival.

Language is the sign of the cultural life of a people, its soul in thought and mind standing behind and enriching its soul in action. Therefore it is here that the phenomena and utilities of diversity may be most readily seized ; but these truths are important because they apply equally to the thing it expresses, symbolises and serves as an instrument. Diversity of language is worth keeping because diversity of cultures, of soul-groups is worth keeping, because without that life cannot have full play and

there is a danger, almost an inevitability of decline and stagnation. Thus disappearance into a simple unity, of which the systematic thinker dreams as an ideal and which we have seen to be a substantial possibility and even a likelihood, if a certain tendency becomes dominant, might lead to political peace, economical well-being, perfect administration, the solution of a hundred material problems, as did on a lesser scale the Roman unity; but to what eventual good if it leads also to the sterilisation of the mind and the stagnation of the soul of humanity? In laying this stress on culture, on the things of the mind and the spirit, there need be no intention of undervaluing the outward, material side of life, belittling that to which Nature always attaches so insistent an importance. On the contrary, the inner and the outer depend upon each other. We see for instance in the life of a nation that a great period of national culture and vigorous mental and soul life is always part of a general stirring and movement which has its counterpart in the outward political, economical, practical life of the nation. It brings the latter about, but also it itself needs that to flourish with an entirely full and healthy vigour. Therefore the peace, well-being and order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world-culture in which all humanity must be united; but neither of these unities, the outward or inward, must be devoid of a thing even more important than peace, order and well-being,—freedom and vigour of life, which can only be assured by variation, by group freedom and individual freedom. Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical, but a living unity full of healthy freedom and diversity is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised.

But how is this difficult end to be secured? For just as an excessive uniformity and centralisation may bring

about the disappearance of necessary variations and indispensable liberties, so a vigorous diversity and individuality may lead to an incurable persistence or constant return of the old separatism which will prevent unity from completing itself or will not allow it to get firm roots. For it will not be enough for the constituent groups or divisions to have a certain formal administrative and legislative separateness like the states of the American union, if as there it is only in mechanical variations that there is liberty and all real departures from the general norm proceeding from an inner variation are discouraged or forbidden. Nor will a unity plus independence of the German type be enough; for there the real fact is a unifying and disciplined Prussianism and independence is only in the form. Nor will even the English colonial system give us any useful suggestion, for although there is there a separate vigour of life, the brain, heart and central spirit are in the metropolitan country and the rest are at the best only outlying posts of the Anglo-Saxon idea. The Swiss cantonal life offers no fruitful similitude, not only on account of its exiguity, but because there the real fact is a single Swiss life and practical spirit with a mental dependence on three foreign cultures sharply dividing the race, so that a common culture does not exist. The problem is rather, on a larger and more difficult scale and with greater complexities, that which offers itself now to the British empire, how to unite Great Britain, Ireland, the Colonies, Egypt, India in a real community, throwing their gains into a common stock, using their energies for a common end, finding the account of their national individuality in a supranational life, yet preserving that individuality, Ireland keeping the Irish soul and life and cultural principle, India the Indian soul and life and cultural principle, the other units developing theirs, not united by a common Anglicisation, which was the past empire-building ideal, but finding a greater, as yet unrealised principle of free union. Nothing

has yet been suggested in the way of solution except some sort of bunch or rather bouquet system, unifying its clusters not by the livingstalk of a common origin or united past, for that does not exist, but by an artificial thread of administrative unity which may at any moment be snapped irretrievably by centrifugal forces.

It may be said that after all, unity being the first need, that should be achieved at any cost as national unity was achieved by crushing out the separate existence of the local units and afterwards a new principle of grouping or variation may be found other than that of the nation unit. But the parallel here becomes illusory. For the nation was historically the growth into a larger unit among many units ; the old richness of small units which gave such splendid cultural, but such unsatisfactory political results in Greece, Italy, India was lost indeed, but the same principle of life by diversity was preserved with nations for the diverse units and the cultural life of a continent for the common background. Here nothing of the kind is possible. There will be a sole unity, the world-nation, with no outer source of diversity ; therefore the inner source has to be modified indeed, subordinated in some way, but preserved. It may be that it will not, that the unitarian idea will eventually prevail, turning the nations into geographical departments or provinces ; but in that case the outraged need of life will have its revenge, either by a stagnation, a collapse and a detrition fruitful of new separations, or by some principle of revolt from within, as for example by the principle of Anarchism enforcing itself and breaking down the world-order for a new creation. The question is whether there is not somewhere a principle of unity in diversity by which this method of action and reaction, creation and destruction, realisation and relapse cannot be, if not altogether avoided, yet mitigated in its action and led to a more serene and harmonious working.



# The Future Poetry

---

(1)

It is not often that we see published in India literary criticism which is of the first order, at once discerning and suggestive, criticism which forces us both to see and think. A book which recently I have read and more than once reperused with a yet unexhausted pleasure and fruitfulness, Mr. James Cousins' *New Ways in English Literature*,\* is eminently of this kind. It raises thought which goes beyond the strict limits of the author's subject and suggests the whole question of the future of poetry in the age which is coming upon us, the higher functions open to it—as yet very imperfectly fulfilled,—and the part which English literature on the one side and the Indian mind and temperament on the other are likely to take in determining the new trend. The author is himself a poet, a writer of considerable force in the Irish movement which has given contemporary English literature its two greatest poets, and the book on every page attracts and satisfies by its living force of style, its almost perfect measure, its delicacy of touch, its fineness and depth of observation and insight, its just sympathy and appreciation.

---

\* Ganesh and Co. Madras.

For the purpose for which these essays have been, not indeed written, but put together, the criticism, fine and helpful as it is, suffers from one great fault,—there is too little of it. Mr. Cousins is satisfied with giving us the essential, just what is necessary for a trained mind to seize intimately the spirit and manner and poetic quality of the writers whose work he brings before us. This is done sometimes in such a masterly manner that even one touch more might well have been a touch in excess. The essay on Emerson is a masterpiece in this kind ; it gives perfectly in a few pages all that should be said about Emerson's poetry and nothing that need not be said. But some of the essays, admirable in themselves, are too slight for our need. The book is not indeed intended to be exhaustive in its range. Mr. Cousin's wisely takes for the most part,—there is one notable exception,—writers with whom he is in close poetical sympathy or for whom he has a strong appreciation ; certain names which have come over to our ears with some flourish of the trumpets of renown, Thompson, Masfield, Hardy, do not occur at all or only in a passing allusion. But still the book deals among contemporary poets with Tagore, A. E. and Yeats, among recent poets with Stephen Phillips, Meredith, Carpenter, great names all of them, not to speak of lesser writers. This little book with its 135 short pages is almost too small a pedestal for the figures it has to support, not, be it understood, for the purposes of the English reader interested in poetry, but for ours in India who have on this subject a great ignorance and, most of us, a very poorly trained critical intelligence. We need something a little more ample to enchain our attention and fix in us a permanent interest ; a fingerpost by the way is not enough for the Indian reader, you will have to carry him some miles on the road if you would have him follow it.

But Mr. Cousins has done a great service to the Indian mind by giving it at all a chance to follow this direc-

tion with such a guide to point out the way. The English language and literature is practically the only window the Indian mind, with the narrow and meagre and yet burdensome education given to it, possesses into the world of European thought and culture ; but, at least as possessed at present, it is a painfully small and insufficient opening. English poetry for all but a few of us stops short with Tennyson and Browning, when it does not stop with Byron and Shelley. A few have heard of some of the recent, fewer of some of the contemporary poets ; their readers are hardly enough to make a number. In this matter of culture this huge peninsula, once one of the greatest centres of civilisation, has been for long the most provincial of provinces ; it has been a patch of tilled fields round a lawyer's office and a Government cutcherry, a cross between a little district town and the most rural of villages, at its largest a dried-up bank far away from the great stream of the world's living thought and action, visited with no great force by occasional and belated waves, but for the rest a bare field for sluggish activities, the falsest possible education, a knowledge always twenty-five or fifty years behind the time. The awakening brought by the opening years of the twentieth century has chiefly taken the form of a revival of cultural patriotism, highly necessary for a nation which has a distinctive contribution to make to the human spirit in its future development, some new and great thing which it must evolve out of a magnificent past for the opening splendours of the future ; but in order that this may evolve rapidly and surely, it needs a wide and sound information, a richer stuff to work upon, a more vital touch with the life and master tendencies of the world around it. Such books as this will be of invaluable help in creating what is now deficient.

The helpfulness of this suggestive work comes more home to me personally because I have shared to the full the state of mere blank which is the ordinary condition

of the Indian mind with regard to its subject. Such touch as in the intellectual remoteness of India I have been able to keep up with the times, had been with contemporary continental rather than contemporary English literature. With the latter all vital connection came to a dead stop with my departure from England a quarter of a century ago ; it had for its last events the discovery of Meredith as a poet, in his *Modern Love*, and the perusal of *Christ in Hades*,—some years before its publication,—the latter an unforgettable date. I had long heard, standing aloof in giant ignorance, the great name of Yeats, but with no more than a fragmentary and mostly indirect acquaintance with some of his work ; A. E. only lives for me in Mr. Cousins' pages ; other poets of the day are still represented in my mind by scattered citations. In the things of culture such a state of ignorance is certainly an unholy state of sin ; but in this immoral and imperfect world even sin has sometimes its rewards, and I get that now in the joy and light of a new world opening to me all in one view while I stand, Cortes-like, on the peak of the large impression created for me by Mr. Cousins' book. For the light we get from a vital and illuminative criticism from within by another mind can sometimes almost take the place of a direct knowledge.

There disengages itself from these essays not so much a special point of view as a distinctive critical and literary temperament, which may be perhaps not so much the whole mind of the critic as the response to his subject in a mind naturally in sympathy with it. Mr. Cousins is a little nervous about this in his preface ; he is apprehensive of being labelled as an idealist. The cut and dried distinction between idealism and realism in literature has always seemed to me to be a little arbitrary and unreal, and whatever its value in drama and fiction, it has no legitimate place in poetry. What we find here is a self-identification with what is best and most characteristic of a

new spirit in the age, a new developing aesthetic temper and outlook,—or should we rather say, inlook ? Its mark is a greater (not exclusive) tendency to the spiritual rather than the merely earthly, to the inward and subjective than the outward and objective, to the life within and behind than to the life in front, and in its purest, which seems to be its Irish form, a preference of the lyrical to the dramatic and of the inwardly suggestive to the concrete method of poetical presentation. Every distinctive temperament has naturally the defect of an insufficient sympathy, often a pronounced and intolerant antipathy towards all that departs from its own motives. Moreover contemporary criticism is beset with many dangers ; there is the charm of new thought and feeling and expression of tendency which blinds us to the defects and misplaces or misproportions to our view the real merits of the expression itself ; there are powerful cross-currents of immediate attraction and repulsion which carry us from the true track ; especially, there is the inevitable want of perspective which prevents us from getting a right vision of things too near us in time. And if in addition one is oneself part of a creative movement with powerful tendencies and a pronounced ideal, it becomes difficult to get away from the standpoint it creates to a larger critical outlook. From these reefs and shallows Mr. Cousins' sense of measure and justice of appreciation largely, generally indeed, preserve him, though not, I think, quite invariably. But still it is not a passionless, quite disinterested criticism which we get or want from this book, but a much more helpful thing, an interpretation of work which embodies the creative tendencies of the time by one who has himself lived in them and helped both to direct and to form.

Mr. Cousins' positive criticism is almost always fine, just and inspired by a warm glow of sympathy and understanding tempered by discernment, restraint and measure ; whatever the future critic, using his scales and balance, may

have to take away from it, will be, one would imagine, only by way of a slight alteration of stress here and there. His depreciations, though generally sound enough, are not, I think, invariably as just as his appreciations. Thus his essay on the work of J. M. Synge, "the Realist on the Stage," is, in sharp distinction from the rest of the book, an almost entirely negative and destructive criticism, strong and interesting, but written from the point of view of the ideals and aims of the Irish literary movement against a principle of work which seemed entirely to depart from them; yet we are allowed to get some glimpse of a positive side of dramatic power which the critic does not show us, but leaves us rather to guess at. Mr. Cousins seems to me to take the dramatist's theory of his own art more seriously than it should be taken; for the creator can seldom be accepted—there may of course be exceptions, rare instances of clairvoyant self-sight—as a sound exponent of his own creative impulse. He is in his central inspiration the instrument of a light and power not his own, and his account of it is usually vitiated, out of focus, an attempt to explain the workings of this impersonal power by motives which were the contribution of his own personal effort, but which are often quite subordinate or even accidental side-lights of the lower brain-mind, not the central moving force.

Mr. Cousins has pointed out clearly enough that art can never be a copy of life. But it is also, true, I think, that that is not the secret object of most realism, whatever it may say about itself; realism is in fact a sort of nether idealism, or, perhaps more correctly, sometimes an inverse, sometimes a perverse romanticism which tries to get a revelation of creative truth by an effective force of presentation, by an intensity, often an exaggeration at the opposite side of the complex phenomenon of life. All art starts from the sensuous and sensible, or takes it as a continual point of reference or, at the lowest, uses it as a

symbol and a fount of images ; even when it soars into invisible worlds, it is from the earth that it soars ; but equally all art worth the name must go beyond the visible, must reveal, must show us something that is hidden, and in its total effect not reproduce but create. We may say that the artist creates an ideal world of his own, not necessarily in the sense of ideal perfection, but a world that exists in the idea, the imagination and vision of the creator. More truly, he throws into significant form a truth he has seen, which may be truth of hell or truth of heaven or an immediate truth behind things terrestrial or any other, but is never merely the external truth of earth. By that ideative truth and the power, the perfection and the beauty of his presentation and utterance of it, his work must be judged.

Some occasional utterances in this book seem to spring from very pronounced idiosyncracies of its distinctive literary temperament or standpoint and cannot always be accepted without reservation. I do not myself share its rather disparaging attitude towards the dramatic form and motive or its comparative coldness towards the architectural faculty and impulse in poetry. When Mr. Cousins tells us that "its poetry and not its drama will be the thing of life" in Shakespeare's work, I feel that the distinction is not sound all through, that there is a truth behind it, but it is overstated. Or when still more vivaciously he dismisses Shakespeare the dramatist "to a dusty and reverent immortality in the libraries" or speaks of the "monstrous net of his life's work" which but for certain buoys of line and speech "might sink in the ocean of forgetfulness," I cannot help feeling that this can only be at most the mood of the hour born of the effort to get rid of the burden of its past and move more freely towards its future, and not the definitive verdict of the poetic and aesthetic mind on what has been so long the object of its sincere admiration and a powerful presence

and influence. Perhaps I am wrong, I may be too much influenced by my own settled idiosyncracies of an aesthetic temperament and being impregnated with an early cult for the work of the great builders in Sanskrit and Greek, Italian and English poetry. At any rate, this is true that whatever relation we may keep with the great masters of the past, our present business is to go beyond and not to repeat them, and it must always be the lyrical motive and spirit which find a new secret and begin a new creation; for the lyrical is the primary poetical motive and spirit and the dramatic and epic must wait for it to open for them their new heaven and new earth.

I have referred to these points which are only side issues or occasional touches in Mr. Cousins' book, because they are germane to the question which it most strongly raises, the future of English poetry and of the world's poetry. It is still uncertain how that future will deal with the old quarrel between idealism and realism, for the two tendencies these names roughly represent are still present in the tendencies of recent work. More generally, poetry always sways between two opposite trends, towards predominance of subjective vision and towards an emphasis on objective presentation, and it can rise too beyond these to a spiritual plane where the distinction is exceeded, the divergence reconciled. Again, it is not likely that the poetic imagination will ever give up the narrative and dramatic form of its creative impulse; a new spirit in poetry, even though primarily lyrical, is moved always to seize upon and do what it can with them,—as we see in the impulsion which has driven Maeterlinck, Yeats, Rabindranath to take hold of the dramatic form for self-expression as well as the lyrical in spite of their dominant subjectivity. We may perhaps think that this was not the proper form for their spirit, that they cannot get there a full or a flawless success; but who shall lay down rules for creative genius or say



what it shall or shall not attempt? It follows its own course and makes its own shaping experiments. And it is interesting to speculate whether the new spirit in poetry will take and use with modifications the old dramatic and narrative forms, as did Robindranath in his earlier dramatic attempts, or quite transform them to its own ends, as he has attempted in his later work. But after all these are subordinate issues.

It will be more fruitful to take the main substance of the matter for which the body of Mr. Cousins' criticism gives a good material. Taking the impression it creates for a starting-point and the trend of English poetry for our main text, but casting our view farther back into the past, we may try to sound what the future has to give us through the medium of the poetic mind and its power for creation and interpretation. The issues of recent activity are still doubtful and it would be rash to make any confident prediction; but there is one possibility which this book strongly suggests and which it is at least interesting and may be fruitful to search and consider. That possibility is the discovery of a closer approximation to what we might call the *mantra* in poetry, that rhythmic speech which, as the Veda puts it, rises at once from the heart of the seer and from the distant home of the Truth,—the discovery of the word, the divine movement, the form of thought proper to the reality which, as Mr. Cousins' excellently says, "lies in the apprehension of a something stable behind the instability of word and deed, something that is a reflection of the fundamental passion of humanity for something beyond itself, something that is a dim foreshadowing of the divine urge which is prompting all creation to unfold itself and to rise out of its limitations towards its Godlike possibilities." Poetry in the past has done that in moments of supreme elevation; in the future there seems to be some chance of its making it a more conscious aim and steadfast endeavour.

A. G.

# Sentences from Bhartrihari

---

## IN PRAISE OF VIRTUE

### 1

Homage to him who keeps his heart a book  
For stainless matters, prone others' gifts to prize  
And nearness of the good ; whose faithful look  
Rejoices in his own dear wife ; whose eyes  
Are humble to the Master good and wise ;  
A passion high for learning, noble fear  
Of public shame who feels ; treasures the still  
Sweet love of God ; to self no minister,  
But schools that ravener to his lordlier will,  
Far from the evil herd on virtue's hill.

### 2

Eloquence in the assembly ; in the field  
The puissant act, the lion's heart ; proud looks  
Unshaken in defeat, but modest-kind  
Mercy when victory comes ; passionate for books  
High love of learning ; thoughts to fame inclined ;—  
These things are natural to the noble mind.

### 3

Being fortunate, how the noble heart grows soft  
As lilies ! But in calamity's rude shocks  
Rugged and high like a wild mountain's rocks  
It fronts the thunders, granite piled aloft.

## 4

Then is the ear adorned when it inclines  
    To wisdom ; giving bracelets rich exceeds ;  
So the beneficent heart's deep-stored mines  
    Are worked for ore of sweet compassionate deeds,  
And with that gold the very body shines.

## 5

The hand needs not a bracelet for its pride,  
    High liberality its greatness is ;  
The head no crown wants to show deified,  
    Fallen at the Master's feet it best doth please.  
Truth-speaking makes the face more bright to shine ;  
    Deep musing is the glory of the gaze ;  
Strength and not gold in conquering arms divine  
    Triumphs ; calm purity the heart arrays.  
Nature's great men have these for wealth and gem ;  
Riches they need not, nor a diadem.

## 6

Rare are the hearts that for another's joy  
    Fling from them self and hope of their own bliss ;  
Himself unhurt for others' good to try  
    Man's impulse and his common nature is :  
But they who for their poor and selfish aims  
Hurt others, are but fiends with human names.  
Who hurt their brother men themselves unhelped,  
What they are, we know not, nor what horror whelped.

## 7

Here Vishnu sleeps, here find his foes their rest ;  
    The hills have taken refuge, serried lie  
Their armies in deep ocean's sheltering breast ;  
The clouds of doom are of his heart possessed,  
    He harbours nether fire whence he must die.  
Cherisher of all in vast equality,  
Lo, the wide strong sublime and patient sea !

# आयं

## A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th January 1918

---

### CONTENTS

---

THE LIFE DIVINE.....	Aurobindo Ghose
Chapter XL. The Fundamental Character of the Ignorance	
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA.....	A. G.
Ch. XXXVIII. Samadhi	
ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....	A. G.
The Divine Worker	
THE ETERNAL WISDOM.....	Paul Richard
The Conquest of Self— To Renounce Desire	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT XVIII.....	Aurobindo Ghose
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY XXIX	
THE FUTURE POETRY	
The Essence of Poetry	

---



# The Life Divine

---

## CHAPTER XL

### THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER OF THE IGNORANCE

We know now what is the nature of the knowledge into which we have to grow and what is that human status of partial knowledge which constitutes our share or our nature's characteristic specialisation of the universal ignorance. We should therefore be in a position to define, as far as such a thing can be defined, the nature of the Ignorance itself, its primary functional power and, as we might say, its utility and necessity in the workings of existence. For, in the complete and inalienable self-knowledge of the Brahman, such a phenomenon as the Ignorance cannot have come in as a chance, an intervening accident, an involuntary forgetfulness or confusion, an ugly contretemps for which the All-Wise was not prepared and out of the consequences of which he finds the utmost difficulty in escaping, nor can it be, on the contrary, an inexplicable mystery of his being, original and eternal, of which even he himself, the divine All-teacher, is incapable of giving any account either to himself or to us. It must be a working of the All-Wisdom itself, a power of the All-consciousness which it uses for a primary, an indispensable function in the workings of existence; there must be something which had to be done because it was worth doing, for which the assumption of Ignorance was a necessary means and utility.

It will be evident from what we have already said so often that the Ignorance is not a creator of absolute unrealities, but only of perversions of reality, not a power for utter illusion, but a power for error born of the limitation of knowledge. The Mayavadin holds the error it creates to be an absolute illusion and world-existence itself to be such an error of the Ignorance ; he gives the figure of the rope mistaken for a snake as the exact nature of the mistake made by the soul when it imposes an absolutely non-existent world upon the sole, the eternally featureless reality which is the Brahman. But this figure destroys itself by a cardinal defect of non-applicability. For in the Mayavadin's position the world is absolutely non-existent, or it exists only in the dream, the error, by the Ignorance—which comes in the end to precisely the same thing ; but the snake in the illustration is not absolutely non-existent, it does exist outside the error made by the mind in its vision. If the rope here is a reality, then the snake also is a reality, though a reality which exists elsewhere and not in the place in which the error of the mental vision has put it. If snake were not as much an existence as rope, if it had not been seen elsewhere as really as the rope here, then the man could not possibly have mistaken the rope for a serpent. The illustration would only light up the truth of the matter for us, if we supposed the world of forms to be real as Brahman is real, but to exist not where the soul sees it, in its present consciousness, in the infinite and universal Being, but elsewhere, in some past consciousness, in some other than the infinite and universal Being. But this would lead to an obvious absurdity.

The illustration and the objection to it are not mere subtleties of a barren logomachy ; they involve a question of solid philosophical importance,—whether the human consciousness is at all capable of mistaking a thing absolutely unreal or non-existent for a reality or even of at

all conceiving of anything as existent which is in all its circumstances utterly non-existent. Nothing in our experience justifies us in attributing to it any such capacity. The consciousness may mistake one reality for another, rope for snake or snake for rope ; it may combine falsely two realities as when it puts wings on the shoulders of a human figure or delineates a woman's form ending in the tail of a fish and calls the one an angel, the other a mermaid. The human imagination works always upon realities or at least upon things of which it has had assurance as realities of its experience, even though it makes of them a false presentation. It may create for itself a god, a devil or a dragon ; but from what does it create them ? We may say that the dragon is a prolongation into the present of a past fact or experience, the huge winged reptiles which were once a reality upon the physical earth, that the God or the devil are realities on another plane of existence, in a more subtle substance of matter, and that the error of the consciousness is to put them in the wrong place or time, present instead of past or future, in the physical skies or on the peaks of the Himalayas or Ida or Olympus, and to figure them in too human forms and with too human attributes. Or if we have no experience of and therefore no faith in these other planes, we must still see that the god and devil are the reality of human beings raised to a higher degree of nature in the consciousness or depressed to a lower by the elimination of defects of power and perfection in the one case or of all modifications and denials of evil in the other and by the attribution of immortality, which is not a creation in the void, but simply an indefinite prolongation of the actual fact of long-continued existence which already belongs to certain forms in the universe.

In no case do we find the consciousness creating its illusions out of unreal, non-existent materials ; it is always with existences, with realities that it deals, although



it may deal with them wrongly, by misapplication, by false combination. Dreams themselves are not a creation of non-existent forms, but an incongruous presentation of images of things which in themselves are real and of which the waking mind has had real experience. We may say that the ignorance misrepresents, makes a false picture of the self-manifestation of the Brahman, or that the world as we see it is a dream, an erroneous image, and that when we wake into knowledge, we shall see the reality by all the elements of the picture being put into their proper place and relation ; but we cannot say that all the elements out of which we have combined the dream, the false picture, are non-existent and the ignorance has created and combined them out of nothing or, what is equally impossible and comes to the same thing, out of a substance of reality which is not only originally one and featureless, but incapable of variation or feature. To do so would be to attribute to mental consciousness just the one capacity which all experience proves that it does not possess.

We then come to the second line of trenches of the illusionist theory when, withdrawing a little from its first absolute position in order to come back to it more firmly, it admits that forms and a world of forms may have a certain subordinate and temporal reality ; but the only eternal reality is Brahman and therefore the other, not being eternal, is in highest truth an illusion. It gives here the example of the earth and the pot ; the earth is the substance, the reality, because it is permanent, but the pot is the form, the phenomenon, the apparent reality, and in final truth unreal, because it is impermanent : for everything that has a beginning and an end, shows by the very fact of ending that it never had a real existence. Again, both the illustration and the conclusion it illustrates fail when they are rigorously tested. It is true that forms begin and end, but it is also true that they have

no real end, because they have obviously a potentiality of perpetual recurrence ; they may not be eternal in constant perpetuity, but they may and seem to be eternal in recurrent perpetuity. A particular pot-form is brought out of earth and dissolved, but the general form of pot with its infinite power of self-variation is a thing which will last as long as the earth-substance lasts ; it represents the power of form eternally inherent in substance ; it is there latent, subconsciously powerful to exist even when it does not exist outwardly, unmanifestly existent in the true sense of existence even when not active in manifest being. So must it be with the world and the Brahman. Although particular world-forms may appear and disappear,—we cannot say that they will not again recur,—there is nothing to show that world in itself ever comes to an end or that there was before, or will be hereafter, any space of time during which not at all in infinite Brahman did anything of the nature of universe exist. Even if we suppose this, still it was there latent, had been before and must be again. But if world is without any real beginning or any real end, then it too is eternal and cannot be said to be, in this sense either, a non-existence, an illusion, an unreality.

Resiling a step back from this position we may say that this does not matter, since the individual soul can merge itself into the Brahman and lose all consciousness of world-being and this is a sufficient proof that there is, highest above all, the eternal Brahman to whom world has no existence ; because he is self-existence alone and unqualified. But here too several qualifications have to be made. First, this status of the soul is arrived at in a trance of consciousness from which world-existence is excluded, but which can and does return out of itself into world-existence ; therefore unconsciousness of world-being, *sushupti*, a sleep without waking, cannot be the whole eternal nature of Brahman-consciousness. Secondly,

we see that this loss of world-being is confined to the individual soul, the Jivatman, and though it is held that the Jivatman and the Brahman are one without difference or distinction, yet the retirement of the Jivatman does not bring about the cessation of world, does not even affect its unchanged persistence. Either then the world exists eternally as the sum of a plurality of souls and there are two selves, the one spirit eternally unconscious of world-being, into which the Jivatman retires, and the plural soul perpetually conscious of it ; or else Brahman itself has perpetually two coexistent conditions, one of sleep, the other of waking, one in which he is eternally conscious of the truth of immutable unity, another in which he is perpetually subject to the illusion of variable multiplicity ; and he has the power in any individual soul of returning eternally and without relapse to the truth, the higher state, but in the total plurality he can only draw back to it for a time, but must always relapse into the illusion. But how can this eternal duality be possible unless Brahman in himself, in his highest truth of being is not limited by either oneness or multiplicity, immutability or variation, but is something beyond which is simultaneously conscious of both conditions,—as behind the oneness of earth and the multiplicity of forms of earth there is a being and a power of being which in its indeterminate oneness takes the appearance of earth, in its determinate multiplicity the appearance of many earth-forms ? The highest state of the liberated soul would be then identification with this highest consciousness of Brahman which is eternally aware of both its status of unity and its status of multiplicity, but limited by neither. Then, either an exclusive consciousness of oneness empty of world or an exclusive consciousness of plural world-being would be, as the Upanishad affirms, a state of ignorance, and the simultaneous possession of both in a consciousness higher than either would be the truth

and the highest status.

We might say that still world-being is an illusion and the exclusion of it is not indeed the absolute truth, but that by which we enter into the truth; the one is Avidya, the other Vidya; the Brahman possesses eternally both, but is conscious of world-being only as an illusion and of unity as a return from the illusion, and this change or return is reflected in the liberation of the individual Jivatman. We might say too that if the mental consciousness cannot create except out of pre-existent realities, the highest consciousness of Brahman can so create by a sort of omnipotent power of imagination in that consciousness. This imagination is an image-builder, a maker of forms, and all forms are figments of this supreme imaginative consciousness. But forms and images cannot be created except out of some substance, and if the substance is real, the forms also are real. It may be said that the images of dream, delirium, hallucination are absolutely unreal, forms without true substance, illusions; and the world is such a dream, delirium or self-hallucination of the Brahman. But this is an error; for the images of dream, delirium, hallucination are forms of substance, however subtle or fleeting or illusory they may seem to the physical mind. For matter is not the only power of substance. There is substance of mind as well as substance of matter, subtle substance as well as gross substance. Mind is not an illusion but a reality, a power of being, and forms of mind are on their own plane substantial forms of being. All forms in fact must be forms of being, and world-forms can only be forms of the one Being, Brahman, forms of the Real and therefore real in their substance. Figments of consciousness they may be, but consciousness does not mould them out of nothing, but out of the being of Brahman.

We may say that world-forms are only reflections of the reality, not true forms but shadows. But, in the

first place, they must correspond to some truth of that which they reflect ; they are not denials of that truth or things whose appearances have no connection of any kind with its reality, or mere veils which simply serve to conceal it from us. Nor are they only its symbols, its signs of manifestation, but its embodiments. For they are not shadowy reflections, like an image in a glass or in a pool where the reflecting substance is remote from and other than the thing reflected ; here Brahman the being is reflected in himself, in Brahman the consciousness. Not only so, but while the shadow in the glass or the pool does not contain ourselves, our being, our life, our consciousness, world-forms do contain the being, the consciousness, the power of Brahman, they live with his life. Not only is Brahman conscious of them as we are of our shadow in glass or pool, but he is conscious in them and all around them, and they by that are conscious in him. Therefore all the images and analogies by which we try to get away from the reality of Brahman in the world and condemn it as a dream, shadow, reflection, hallucination, mere form, false imposition of the senses, break down when examined, prove to be themselves false in their imperfection, in their inability to represent to us the real facts of Being or even properly to illustrate or throw a light on them. Brahman meets us everywhere to convince us of his omnipresent as well as his remote reality, of the truth of his objective as well as his subjective self-manifestation. We find that he is not only in and around, but verily has become all these existences.

It is in the light of this great fact of Being and of all the facts that devolve from it, it is largely, comprehensively, not by trenchant intellectual subtleties, that we shall best understand the primary nature and general utility of the Ignorance. Being is the first great reality ; Consciousness is the second, Being working upon itself as a Will or self-aware force to liberate into activity its

own truths and powers and throw them into forms by which they can be embodied and work out their potential relations. Ignorance enters in as a secondary power of this conscious Force, for limitation, for division. The Upanishad perceived this when it designed the small, *apam*, as the field of the results of the ignorance and the large, *bhûman*, as the field of the joy of knowledge, and pointed out *bheda*, division, breaking up the all-uniting oneness, as the characteristic action. All ignorance indeed comes by limitation of Knowledge, by division of consciousness. When we look upon the outside of things, we limit ourselves to that external knowledge which is by itself an ignorance ; as when we look at water and know it only as a mobile and liquid substance, until by an enlargement of knowledge out of this limitation we come to know that it is compounded oxygen and hydrogen,—but we do not therefore conclude that water is an illusion, that there is no mobile liquid substance at all and only hydrogen and oxygen exist ; for that would be a fresh limitation, a reverse ignorance. When again we regard ourselves as a separate mind and body, we fall into ignorance by a limitation of self-knowledge which takes the form of a division of consciousness, *bheda*. Enlarging our knowledge out of this limitation we come to know that there is one Mind, one Matter, and our mind and body can never be separable from it, that they are one mind and matter with all other bodies and intelligences. But to see only that one and ignore our individual action mental and physical and the modification that it brings into the universal action, would be again another limitation of knowledge, a reverse ignorance. So too we divide mind and matter and regard them as separate entities, but by enlargement out of this ignorance we see the one being and force of which they are complementary activities ; we come to the One by knowing which all is known,—even as by understanding the nature and action of the one Mind

or the one Force we can know the nature and action of all minds and all forces. But if we see this One only and put out of sight the multiplicity of its forms and activities, we fall, here too, into a limitation of knowledge from the other side, a new division, a reverse ignorance. The One is known through and in the Many, the Many are known by and in the One.

Everywhere this limitation and division reveal themselves as the whole condition of the ignorance ; by enlargement is release into knowledge and into our true being, by comprehensive unity, by the gathering up of infinite realities into the one reality on which they all depend for their truth. Our knowledge of our waking selves is an ignorant limitation, a division from the rest of our being, which we heal by awaking to that rest, to the subconscious and superconscious self, without thereby losing the power to live in the waking world. Our separative ego-sense is an ignorant limitation by which we divide ourselves from God and our innumerable other selves so as to live shut up in the prison of our little personality, and we heal it by awaking to the divine consciousness and the universal consciousness in all beings, but without thereby forfeiting our power to develop in this universality and self-transcendence an individual point and current of thought and action. Our preoccupation with each moment of time and with the little sum of moments of time which make up our present life, is an ignorant limitation by which we divide ourselves from our infinite past and future being without which the present would be impossible, futile, meaningless, purposeless, and we heal it by recovery of our past and our future on the background of our timeless being : so we live from and in our real being, but do not thereby recoil from existence in time or from life in the present, but make it rather more powerful, luminous and effective. So it is with every form of ignorance ; the secret

of each is limitation of consciousness, division of consciousness ; that is the Ignorance, its primary fact and constituting nature.

But how is this limitation and division brought about in the indivisible unity of the Infinite ? We shall see that the secret lies in the power of the force of consciousness, Tapas, by which the world was created and its action is conducted, to dwell in its activity and put back from it all that is not immediately concerned with that activity. And its object is variety of dealings with infinite relations (*vyaśāhāra*), so that by limitation may be produced certain results, a certain play of potentialities which would not be freely operative in the unrestricted light of the illimitable self-conscious existence. Limitation and division are not absolutely real in the Brahman, they are a device for certain purposes of action and relation, *vyaśāhārika* ; they operate, that is to say, not in the integral Brahman consciousness, but in that movement of it only which is absorbed in particular action and relation. They are the play of the actor, not the full reality of the being.

---



# The Synthesis of Yoga

---

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### SAMADHI

Intimately connected with the aim of the Yoga of Knowledge which must always be the growth, the ascent or the withdrawal into a higher or a divine consciousness not now normal to us, is the importance attached to the phenomenon of Yogic trance, to Samadhi. It is supposed that there are states of being which can only be gained in trance; that especially is to be desired in which all action of awareness is abolished and there is no consciousness at all except the pure supramental immersion in immobile, timeless and infinite being. By passing away in this trance the soul departs into the silence of the highest Nirvana without possibility of return into any illusory or inferior state of existence. Samadhi is not so all-important in the Yoga of devotion, but it still has its place there as the swoon of being into which the ecstasy of divine love casts the soul. To enter into it is the supreme step of the ladder of Yogic practice in Rajayoga and Hathayoga. What then is the nature of Samadhi or the utility of its trance in an integral Yoga? It is evident that where our objective includes the possession of the Divine in life, a state of cessation of life cannot be the last consummating step or the highest desirable condition: Yogic trance cannot be an aim, as in so many Yogic systems,

but only a means, and a means not of escape from the waking existence, but to enlarge and raise the whole seeing, living and active consciousness.

The importance of Samadhi rests upon the truth which modern knowledge is rediscovering, but which has never been lost in Indian psychology, that only a small part whether of world-being or of our own being comes into our ken or into our action. The rest is hidden behind in subliminal reaches of being which descend into the profoundest depths of the subconscious and rise to highest peaks of superconscience, or which surround the little field of our waking self with a wide circumconscient existence of which our mind and sense catch only a few indications. The old Indian psychology expressed this fact by dividing consciousness into three provinces, waking state, dream-state, sleep-state, *jāgrat*, *sacpna*, *sushupti*; and it supposed in the human being a waking self, a dream-self, a sleep-self, with the supreme or absolute self of being, the fourth or Turiya, beyond, of which all these are derivations for the enjoyment of relative experience in the world.

If we examine the phraseology of the old books, we shall find that the waking state is the consciousness of the material universe which we normally possess in this embodied existence dominated by the physical mind; the dream state is a consciousness corresponding to the subtler life-plane and mind-plane behind, which to us, even when we get intimations of them, have not the same concrete reality as the things of the physical existence; the sleep-state is a consciousness corresponding to the supramental plane proper to the gnosis, which is beyond our experience because our causal body or envelope of gnosis is not developed in us, its faculties not active, and therefore we are in relation to that plane in a condition of dreamless sleep. The Turiya beyond is the consciousness of our pure self-existence or our absolute being with which

we have no direct relations at all, whatever mental reflections we may receive in our dream or our waking or even, irrecoverably, in our sleep consciousness. This fourfold scale corresponds to the degrees of the ladder of being by which we climb back towards the absolute Divine. Normally therefore we cannot get back from the physical mind to the higher planes or degrees of consciousness without receding from the waking state, without going in away from it and losing touch with the material world. Hence to those who desire to have the experience of these higher degrees, trance becomes a desirable thing, a means of escape from the limitations of the physical mind.

Samadhi or Yogic trance retires to increasing depths according as it draws farther and farther away from the normal or waking state and enters into degrees of consciousness less and less communicable to the waking mind, less and less ready to receive a summons from the waking world. Beyond a certain point the trance becomes complete and it is then almost or quite impossible to awaken or call back the soul that has receded into them ; it can only come back by its own will or at most by a violent shock of physical appeal dangerous to the system owing to the abrupt upheaval of return. There are said to be supreme states of trance in which the soul persisting for too long a time cannot return ; for it loses its hold on the cord which binds it to the consciousness of life, and the body is left, maintained indeed in its set position, not dead by dissolution, but incapable of recovering the ensouled life which had inhabited it. Finally, the Yogin acquires at a certain stage of development the power of abandoning his body definitively without the ordinary phenomena of death, by an act of will,\* or by a process of withdrawing the pranic life-force through the gate of the upward life-current (*udâna*), opening for it

---

\* *Ichchhâ-mrityu*.

a way through the mystic *brahmarandhra* in the head. By departure from life in the state of Samadhi he attains directly to that higher status of being to which he aspires.

In the dream-state itself there are an infinite series of depths ; from the lighter recall is easy and the world of the physical senses is at the doors, though for the moment shut out ; in the deeper it becomes remote and less able to break in upon the inner absorption, the mind has entered into secure depths of trance. There is a complete difference between Samadhi and normal sleep, between the dream state of Yoga and the physical state of dream. The latter belongs to the physical mind ; in the former the mind proper and subtle is at work liberated from the immixture of the physical mentality. The dreams of the physical mind are an incoherent jumble made up partly of responses to vague touches from the physical world round which the lower mind-faculties disconnected from the will and reason, the *buddhi*, weave a web of wandering phantasy, partly of disordered associations from the brain-memory, partly of reflections from the soul travelling on the mental plane, reflections which are, ordinarily, received without intelligence or coordination, wildly distorted in the reception and mixed up confusedly with the other dream elements, with brain-memories and fantastic responses to any sensory touch from the physical world. In the Yogic dream-state, on the other hand, the mind is in clear possession of itself, though not of the physical world, works coherently and is able to use either its ordinary will and intelligence with a concentrated power or else the higher will and intelligence of the more exalted planes of mind. It withdraws from experience of the outer world, it puts its seals upon the physical senses and their doors of communication with material things ; but everything that is proper to itself, thought, reasoning, reflection, vision, it can continue to execute with an increased purity and power of sovereign concentration

free from the distractions and unsteadiness of the waking mind. It can use too its will and produce upon itself or upon its environment mental, moral and even physical effects which will continue and have their after consequences on the waking state subsequent to the cessation of the trance.

To arrive at full possession of the powers of the dream-state, it is necessary first to exclude the attack of the sights, sounds etc. of the outer world upon the physical organs. It is quite possible indeed to be aware in the dream-trance of the outer physical world through the subtle senses which belong to the subtle body ; one may be aware of them just so far as one chooses and on a much wider scale than in the waking condition ; for the subtle senses have a far more powerful range than the gross physical organs, a range which may be made practically unlimited. But this awareness of the physical world through the subtle senses is something quite different from our normal awareness of it through the physical organs ; the latter is incompatible with the settled state of trance, for the pressure of the physical senses breaks the Samadhi and calls back the mind to live in their normal field where alone they have power. But the subtle senses have power both upon their own planes and upon the physical world, though this is to them more remote than their own world of being. In Yoga various devices are used to seal up the doors of the physical sense, some of them physical devices ; but the one all-sufficient means is a force of concentration by which the mind is drawn inward to depths where the call of physical things can no longer easily attain to it. A second necessity is to get rid of the intervention of physical sleep. The ordinary habit of the mind when it goes in away from contact with physical things is to fall into the torpor of sleep or its dreams, and therefore when called in for the purposes of Samadhi, it gives or tends to give, at the first chance, by sheer force

of habit, not the response demanded, but its usual response of physical slumber. This habit of the mind has to be got rid of ; the mind has to learn to be awake in the dream state, in possession of itself, not with the outgoing, but with an ingathered wakefulness in which, though immersed in itself, it exercises all its powers.

The experiences of the dream-state are infinitely various. For not only has it sovereign possession of the usual mental powers, reasoning, discrimination, will, imagination, and can use them in whatever way, on whatever subject, for whatever purpose it pleases, but it is able to establish connection with all the worlds to which it has natural access or to which it chooses to acquire access, from the physical to the higher mental worlds. This it does by various means open to the subtlety, flexibility and comprehensive movement of this internalised mind liberated from the narrow limitations of the physical outward-going senses. It is able first to take cognizance of all things whether in the material world or upon other planes by aid of perceptible images, not only images of things visible, but of sounds, touch, smell, taste, movement, action, of all that makes itself sensible to the mind and its organs. For the mind in Samadhi has access to the inner space called sometimes the *chidakasha*, to depths of more and more subtle ether which are heavily curtained from the physical sense by the grosser ether of the material universe, and all things sensible, whether in the material world or any other, create reconstituting vibrations, sensible echoes, reproductions, recurrent images of themselves which that subtler ether receives and retains.

It is this which explains many of the phenomena of clairvoyance, clair-audience, etc ; for these phenomena are only the exceptional admission of the waking mentality into a limited sensitiveness to what might be called the image memory of the subtle ether, by which not only the signs of all things past and present, but even those of

things future can be seized ; for things future are already accomplished to knowledge and vision on higher planes of mind and their images can be reflected upon mind in the present. But these things which are exceptional to the waking mentality, difficult and to be perceived only by the possession of a special power or else after assiduous training, are natural to the dream-state of trance consciousness in which the subliminal mind is free. And that mind can also take cognizance of things on various planes not only by these sensible images, but by a species of thought perception or of thought reception and impression analogous to that phenomenon of consciousness which in modern psychical science has been given the name of telepathy. But the powers of the dream mind do not end here. It can by a sort of projection of itself, in a subtle form of its mental body, actually enter into other planes and worlds or into distant places and scenes of this world, move among them with a sort of bodily presence and bring back the direct experience of their scenes and truths and occurrences. It may even project actually the mental body for the same purpose and travel in it, leaving the physical body in a profoundest trance without sign of life until its return.

The greatest value of the dream-state of Samadhi lies, however, not in these more outward things, but in its power to open up easily higher ranges and powers of thought, emotion, will by which the soul grows in height, range and self-mastery. Especially, withdrawing from the distraction of sensible things, it can, in a perfect power of concentrated self-seclusion, prepare itself by a free reasoning, thought, discrimination and, finally, mental vision and identification for access to the Divine, the supreme Self, the transcendent Truth, not only in its principles and powers but in its pure and highest Being. Or it can by an absorbed inner joy and emotion, as in a sealed and secluded chamber of the soul, prepare itself

for the delight of union with the divine Beloved, the Master of all bliss.

For the integral Yoga this method of Samadhi may seem to have the disadvantage that when it ceases, the thread is broken and the soul returns into the distraction and imperfection of the outward life, with only such an elevating effect upon that outer life as the general memory of these deeper experiences may produce. But this gulf, this break is not inevitable. In the first place, it is only in the untrained psychic being that the experiences of the trance are a blank to the waking mind ; as it becomes the master of its Samadhi, it is able to pass without any gulf of oblivion from the inner to the outer waking. Secondly, when this has been once done, what is attained in the inner state, becomes easier to acquire by the waking consciousness and to turn into the normal experience, powers, mental status of the waking life. The subtle mind which is normally eclipsed by the insistence of the physical being, becomes powerful even in the waking state, until even there the enlarging man is able to live in his subtle as well as his physical body, to be aware of it and in it, to use its senses, faculties, powers, to dwell in possession of supraphysical truth, consciousness and experience.

The sleep-state ascends to a higher power of being, beyond thought into pure consciousness, beyond emotion into pure bliss, beyond will into pure mastery ; it is the gate of union with the supreme state of Sachchidananda out of which all the activities of the world are born. But here we must take care to avoid the pitfalls of symbolic language. The use of the words dream and sleep for these higher states is nothing but an image drawn from the experience of the normal physical mind with regard to planes in which it is not at home. It is not the truth that the Self in the third status called perfect sleep, *sushupti*, is in a state of slumber. The sleep self is on the contrary



described as Prajna, the Master of Wisdom and Knowledge, Self of the Gnosis, and as Ishwara, the Lord of being. To the physical mind a sleep, it is to our wider and subtler consciousness a greater waking. To the normal mind all that exceeds its normal experience but still comes into its scope, seems a dream; but at the point where it borders on things quite beyond its scope, it can no longer see truth even as in a dream, but passes into the blank incomprehension and non-reception of slumber. This border-line varies with the power of the individual mind, with the degree and height of its enlightenment and awakening. The line may be pushed up higher and higher until it may pass even beyond the mind. Normally indeed the human mind cannot be awake even with the inner waking of trance on the supramental levels; but this disability can be overcome. Awake on these levels the soul becomes master of the ranges of gnostic thought, gnostic will, gnostic delight, and if it can do this in Samadhi, it may carry its memory of experience and its power of experience over into the waking state. Even on the yet higher level open to us, that of the Ananda, the awakened soul may become similarly possessed of the Bliss Self both in its concentration and in its cosmic comprehension. But still there may be ranges above from which it can bring back no memory except that which says, "somehow, indescribably, I was in bliss," the bliss of an unconditioned existence beyond all potentiality of expression by thought or description by image or feature. Even the sense of being may disappear in an experience in which the word existence loses its sense and the Buddhist symbol of Nirvana seems alone and sovereignly justified. However high the power of awakening goes, there seems to be a beyond in which the image of sleep, of *sushupti*, will still find its application.

Such is the principle of the Yogic trance, Samadhi,—into its complex phenomena we need not now enter. It

is sufficient to note its double utility in the integral Yoga. It is true that up a point difficult to define or delimit almost all that Samadhi can give, can be acquired without recourse to Samadhi. But still there are certain heights of spiritual experience of which the direct as opposed to a reflecting experience can only be acquired deeply and in its fullness by means of the Yogic trance. And even for that which can be otherwise acquired, it offers a ready means, a facility which becomes more helpful, if not indispensable, the higher and more difficult of access become the planes on which the heightened spiritual experience is sought. Once attained there, it has to be brought as much as possible into the waking consciousness. For in a Yoga which embraces all life completely and without reserve, the full use of Samadhi comes only when its gains can be made the normal possession and experience for an integral waking of the embodied soul in the human being.

---

# Essays on the Gita

---

## THE DIVINE WORKER

To attain to the divine birth,—a divinising new birth of the soul into a higher consciousness,—and to do divine works both as a means towards that before it is attained and as an expression of it after it is attained, is then the Karmayoga of the Gita. The Gita does not try to define works by any outward signs through which it can be recognisable to an external gaze, measurable by the criticism of the world ; it deliberately renounces even the ordinary ethical distinctions by which men seek to guide themselves in the light of the human reason. The signs by which it distinguishes divine works are all profoundly intimate and subjective ; the stamp by which they are known is invisible, spiritual, supra-ethical.

They are recognizable only by the light of the soul from which they come. For, it says " what is action and what is inaction, as to this even the sages are perplexed and deluded," because judging by practical, social, ethical, intellectual standards, they discriminate by accidentals and do not go to the root of the matter ; " I will declare to thee that action by the knowledge of which thou shalt be released from all ills. One has to understand about action as well as to understand about wrong action and

about inaction one has to understand ; thick and-tangled is the way of works." Action in the world is like a deep forest, *gahana*, through which man goes stumbling as best he can, by the light of the ideas of his time, the standards of his personality, his environment, or rather of many times, many personalities, layers of thoughts and ethics from many social stages all inextricably confused together, temporal and conventional amidst all their claim to absoluteness and immutable truth, empirical and irrational in spite of their aping of right reason. And finally the sage seeking in the midst of it all a highest foundation of fixed law and an original truth finds himself obliged to raise the last supreme question, whether all action and life itself are not a delusion and a snare and whether cessation from action, *akarma*, is not the last resort of the tired and disillusioned human soul. But, says Krishna, in this matter even the sages are perplexed and deluded. For by action, by works, not by inaction comes the knowledge and the release.

What then is the solution ? what is that type of works by which we shall be released from the ills of life, from this doubt, this error, this grief, from this mixed, impure and baffling result even of our purest and best-intentioned acts, from these million forms of evil and suffering ? No outward distinctions need be made, is the reply ; no work the world needs, be shunned ; no limit or hedge set round our human activities ; on the contrary, all actions should be done, but from a soul in Yoga with the Divine, *yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*. *Akarma*, cessation from action is not the way ; the man who has attained to the insight of the highest reason, perceives that such inaction is itself a constant action, a state subject to the workings of Nature and her qualities. The mind that takes refuge in physical inactivity, is still under the delusion that it and not Nature is the doer of works ; it has mistaken inertia for liberation ; it does not see that even

in what seems absolute inertia greater than that of the stone or clod, Nature is at work, keeps unimpaired her hold. On the contrary in the full flood of action the soul is free from its works, is not the doer nor bound by what is done, and he who lives in the freedom of the soul, not in the bondage of the modes of Nature, alone has release from works. This is what the Gita clearly means when it says that he who in action can see inaction and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men. This saying hinges upon the Sankhya distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, between the free inactive soul, eternally calm, pure and unmoved in the midst of works, and ever active Nature operative as much in inertia and cessation as in the overt turmoil of her visible hurry of labour. This is the knowledge which the highest effort of the discriminating reason, the *buddhi*, gives to us, and therefore whoever possesses it, is the truly rational and discerning man, *sa buddhimān manushyeshu*,—not the perplexed thinker who judges life and works by the external, uncertain and impermanent distinctions of the lower reason. Therefore the liberated man is not afraid of action, he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kr'itsnakarmakr'it* ; not as others do them in subjection to Nature, but poised in the silent calm of the soul, tranquilly in Yoga with the Divine. The Divine is the lord of his works, he is only their channel through the instrumentality of his nature conscious of and subject to her Lord. By the flaming intensity and purity of this knowledge all his works are burned up as in a fire and his mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark from them, calm, silent, unperturbed, white and clean and pure. To do all in this liberating knowledge, without the personal egoism of the doer, is the first sign of the divine worker.

The second sign is freedom from desire ; for where

there is not the personal egoism of the doer, desire becomes impossible ; it is starved out, sinks for want of a support, dies of inanition. Outwardly the liberated man seems to undertake works of all kinds like other men, on a larger scale perhaps, with a more powerful will and driving-force, for the might of the divine will works in his active nature ; but from all his inceptions and undertakings the inferior concept and nether will of desire is entirely banished, *sarve samārambhāḥ kāmāsaukalpa-varjitāḥ*. He has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, and where one does not work for the fruit, but solely as an impersonal instrument of the Master of works, desire can find no place,—not even the desire to serve successfully, for the fruit is the Lord's and determined by him and not by the personal will and effort, or to serve with credit and to the Master's satisfaction, for the real doer is the Lord himself and all glory belongs to a form of his Shakti missioned in the nature and not to the limited human personality. The human mind and soul of the liberated man does nothing, *na kinchit karoti* ; even though through his nature he engages in action, it is the Nature, the executive Shakti, it is the conscious Goddess governed by the divine Inhabitant who does the work.

It does not follow that the work is not to be done perfectly, with success, with a right adaptation of means to ends : on the contrary a perfect working is easier to action done tranquilly in Yoga than to action done in the blindness of hopes and fears, lamed by the judgments of the stumbling reason, running about amidst the eager trepidations of the hasty human will : Yoga, says the Gita elsewhere, is the true skill in works, *yogah karmasu kauśalam*. But all this is done impersonally by the action of a great universal light and power operating through the individual nature. The Karmayogin knows that the power given to him will be adapted to the fruit decreed, the divine thought behind the work equated with the

work he has to do, the will in him—which will not be wish or desire, but an impersonal drive of conscious power directed towards an aim not his own,—subtly regulated in its energy and direction by the divine wisdom. The result may be success, as the ordinary mind understands it, or it may seem to that mind to be defeat and failure ; but to him it is always the success intended, not by him, but by the all-wise manipulator of action and result, because he does not seek for victory, but only for the fulfilment of the divine will and wisdom which works out its ends through apparent failure as well as and often with greater force than through apparent triumph. Arjuna, bidden to fight, is assured of victory ; but even if certain defeat were before him, he must still fight because that is the present work assigned to him as his immediate share in the great sum of energies by which the divine will is surely accomplished.

The liberated man has no personal hopes ; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions ; he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none : what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment ; what goes from him, he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control ; free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things. His action is indeed a purely physical action, *cârîram kevalam kerna* ; for all else comes from above, is only a reflection of the will, knowledge, joy of the divine Purushottama. Therefore he does not by a stress on doing and its objects bring about in his mind and heart any of those reactions which we call passion and sin. For sin consists not in the outward deed, but in an impure reaction of the personal will, mind and heart ; the impersonal, the spiritual is always pure, *apâpariddham*, and gives to all that it does its own inalienable purity.

This spiritual impersonality is a third sign of the divine worker. All human souls, indeed, who have attained to a certain greatness and largeness are conscious of an impersonal Force or Love or Will and Knowledge working through them, but they are not free from egoistic reactions, sometimes violent enough, of their human personality. But this freedom the liberated soul has attained; for he has cast his personality into the impersonal where it is taken up by the divine Person, the Purushottama, he who uses all qualities and is bound by none. He has become a soul and ceased to be a sum of natural qualities; and such appearance of personality as remains for the operations of Nature, is something unbound, large, flexible, universal; it is a free mould for the Infinite, it is a living mask of the Purushottama.

The result of this desirelessness and impersonality is a perfect equality in the soul and the nature. Equality is the fourth sign of the divine worker. He has, says the Gita, passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvātīta*. We have seen that he regards with equal eyes, without any disturbance of feeling, failure and success, victory and defeat; but not only these, all dualities are in him surpassed and reconciled. The outward distinctions by which men determine their psychological attitude towards the happenings of the world, have for him only a subordinate and instrumental meaning. He does not ignore them, but he is above them. Good happening and evil happening, so all-important to the human soul subject to desire, are to the desireless divine soul equally welcome since by their mingled strand are worked out the developing forms of the eternal good. He cannot be defeated, since all for him is moving towards the divine victory, in the Kurukshetra of Nature, *dharmakshetre kurukshetre*, the field of doings which is the field of the evolving Dharma, and every turn of the conflict has been designed and mapped by the foreseeing eye of the Master of the



battle, the Lord of works and Guide of the dharma. Honour and dishonour from men cannot move him, nor their praise nor their blame; for he has a greater clear-seeing judge and another standard for his action, and his motive admits no dependence upon worldly rewards. Arjuna the Kshatriya prizes naturally honour and reputation and is right in shunning disgrace and the name of coward as worse than death; for to maintain the point of honour and the standard of courage in the world is part of his dharma: but Arjuna the liberated soul need care for none of these things; he has only to know the *kartavyam karma*, the work which the supreme Self demands from him, and to do that and leave the result to the Lord of his actions. He has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all-important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions,—the liberated has risen above these struggles and is seated firmly in the purity of the witnessing and enlightened soul. Sin has fallen away from him, and not a virtue acquired and increased by good action and impaired or lost by evil action, but the inalienable and unalterable purity of a divine and selfless nature is the peak to which he has climbed and the seat upon which he is founded. There the sense of sin and the sense of virtue have no starting-point or applicability.

Arjuna, still in the ignorance, may feel in his heart the call of right and justice and may argue in his mind that abstention from battle would be a sin entailing responsibility for all the suffering that injustice and oppression and the evil karma of the triumph of wrong bring upon men and nations, or he may feel in his heart the recoil from violence and slaughter and argue in his mind that all shedding of blood is a sin which nothing can justify. Both of these attitudes would appeal with equal right to virtue and reason and it would depend upon the man, the

circumstances and the time which of these might prevail in his mind or before the eyes of the world. Or he might simply feel constrained by his heart and his honour to support his friends against his enemies, the cause of the good and just against the cause of the evil and oppressive. The liberated soul looks beyond these conflicting standards; he sees simply what the supreme Self demands from him as needful for the maintenance or for the bringing forward of the evolving Dharma. He has no personal ends to serve, no personal loves and hatreds to satisfy, no rigidly fixed standard of action which opposes its rock-line to the flexible advancing march of the progress of the human race or stands up defiant against the call of the Infinite. He has no personal enemies to be conquered or slain, but sees only men who have been brought up against him by circumstances and the will in things to help by their opposition the march of destiny. Against them he can have no wrath or hatred; for wrath and hatred are foreign to the divine nature. The Asura's desire to break and slay what opposes him, the Rakshasa's grim lust of slaughter are impossible to his calm and peace and his all-embracing sympathy and understanding. He has no wish to injure, but on the contrary a universal friendliness and compassion, *maitrah karuna eva cha*; but this compassion is that of a divine soul overlooking men, embracing all other souls in himself, not the shrinking of the heart and the nerves and the flesh which is the ordinary human form of pity; nor does he attach a supreme importance to the life of the body, but looks beyond to the life of the soul and attaches to the other only an instrumental value. He will not hasten to slaughter and strife, but if war comes in the wave of the Dharma, he will accept it with a large equality and a perfect understanding and sympathy for those whose power and pleasure of domination he has to break and whose joy of triumphant life he has to destroy.

For in all he sees two things, the Divine inhabiting every being equally, the varying manifestation unequal only in its temporary circumstances. In the animal and man, in the dog, the unclean outcast and the learned and virtuous Brahmin, in the saint and the sinner, in the indifferent and the friendly and the hostile, in those who love him and benefit and those who hate him and afflict, he sees himself, he sees God and has at heart for all the same equal kindness, the same divine affection. Circumstances may determine the outward clasp or the outward conflict, but can never affect his equal eye, his open heart, his inner embrace of all. And in all his actions there will be the same principle of soul, a perfect equality, and the same principle of work, the will of the Divine in him active for the need of the race in its gradually developing advance towards the Godhead.

Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance ; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness ; therefore he has desire ; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief ; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil fortune. None of these things can affect the divine soul ; it is ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, *nityatīpīto nirācraṇah* ; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, ingrained in itself, *ātmaratīh, antahsukho 'ntarāmas ta-thāntarjyotir eva cha*. What joy it takes in outward things is not for their sake, not for things which it seeks in them and can miss, but for the self in them, for their expression of the Divine, for that which is eternal in them and which it cannot miss. It is without attachment to their outward touches, but finds everywhere the same joy that

it finds in itself, because it is united with the one and equal Brahman in all their differences, *brahmavoga-yuklâtma*, *sarvabhûtâtma-bhûtâtma*. It does not rejoice in the touches of the pleasant or feel anguish in the touches of the unpleasant ; neither the wounds of things, nor the wounds of friends, nor the wounds of enemies can disturb the firmness of its outgazing mind or bewilder its receiving heart ; this soul is in its nature, as the Upanishad puts it, *avrau'am*, without wound or scar. In all things it has the same imperishable Ananda, *sukham akshayam aṁte*.

That equality, impersonality, peace, joy, freedom does not depend on so outward a thing as doing or not doing works. The Gita insists repeatedly on the difference between the inward and the outward renuciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. The latter, it says, is valueless without the former, hardly possible even to attain without it, and unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact *tyāga* itself is the real and sufficient Sannyasa. " He should be known as the eternal Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires ; free from the dualities he is happily and easily released from all bondage." The painful process of outward Sannyasa, *dukkham āptum*, is an unnecessary process. It is perfectly true that all actions, as well as the fruit of action, have to be given up, to be renounced, but inwardly, not outwardly, not into the inertia of Nature, but to the Lord in sacrifice, into the calm and joy of the Impersonal from whom all action proceeds without disturbing his peace. The true Sannyasa of action is the reposing of all works on the Brahman. " He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing (or founding) his works on the Brahman, *brahmanyâ-thâyati karmāni*, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf." Therefore the Yogins first " do works with the body, mind, understanding, or even merely with the organs of action, abandoning attachment, for self-purification, *sangam tyaktvâ-*

*tmacuddhaye*. By abandoning attachment to the fruits of works the soul in union with Brahman attains to peace of rapt foundation in Brahman, but the soul not in union is attached to the fruit and bound by the action of desire." The foundation, the purity, the peace once attained, the embodied soul perfectly controlling its nature, having renounced all its actions by the mind, inwardly, not outwardly, "sits in its nine-gated city neither doing nor causing to be done." For this soul is the one impersonal Soul in all, the all-pervading Lord, *prabhu, vibhu*, who, as the Impersonal, neither creates the works of the world, nor the mind's idea of being the doer, *na kartr'itvam na karmāni*, nor the coupling of works to their fruits, the chain of cause and effect. All that is worked out by the Nature in the man, *svabhāva*, his principle of self-becoming, as the word literally means. The all-pervading Impersonal accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of any : these are things created by the ignorance in the creature, by his egoism of the doer, by his ignorance of his highest self, by his involution in the operations of Nature, and when the self-knowledge within him is released from this dark envelope, that knowledge lights up like a sun the real self within him ; he knows himself then to be the soul supreme above the instruments of Nature. Pure, infinite, inviolable, immutable, he is no longer affected ; no longer does he imagine himself to be modified by her workings. By complete identification with the Impersonal he can, too, release himself from the necessity of returning by birth into her movement.

And yet this liberation does not at all prevent him from acting. Only, he knows that it is not he who is active, but the modes, the qualities of Nature, her triple *gunas*. "The man who knows the principles of things thinks, his mind in Yoga (with the inactive Impersonal), "I am doing nothing"; when he sees, hears, tastes, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, speaks, takes, ejects, opens his eyes or

closes them, he holds that it is only the senses acting upon the objects of the senses." He himself, safe in the immutable, unmodified soul, is beyond the grip of the three gunas, *triguṇâtīta*; he is neither sattwic, rajasic nor tamasic; he sees with a clear untroubled spirit the alternations of the natural modes and qualities in his action, their rhythmic play of light and happiness, activity and force, rest and inertia. This superiority of the calm soul observing its action but not involved in it, this *traiguṇatītya*, is also a high sign of the divine worker. By itself the idea might lead to a doctrine of the mechanical determinism of Nature and the perfect aloofness and irresponsibility of the soul; but the Gita avoids this fault of an insufficient thought by its supertheistic idea of the Purushottama. It makes it clear that it is not in the end Nature which mechanically determines its own action; it is the will of the Supreme which inspires her, he who has already slain the Dhritarashtrians, he of whom Arjuna is only the human instrument. The reposing of works in the Impersonal is a means of getting rid of the personal egoism of the doer, but the end is to give up all the actions to this Lord of all. "With a consciousness identified with the Self, renouncing all thy actions into Me, *mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātmachetasā*, freed from personal hopes and desires, from the thought of "I" and "mine", delivered from the fever of the soul, fight", work, do my will in the world. The Divine motives, inspires, determines the entire action; the human soul impersonal in the Brahman is the pure and silent channel of his power; that power in the Nature executes the divine movement. Such are the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*, such the actions of the accomplished Karmayogin. They rise from a free spirit and disappear without modifying it, like waves on the surface of conscious, immutable depths. *Gatasangasya muktasya jñānavasthitachetasah, yajñāyācharatah karma samagram pravilīyate*.

# The Eternal Wisdom

---

## BOOK II

### III

#### THE CONQUEST OF SELF

##### TO RENOUNCE DESIRE

- 1 The difficulties which come to birth in the disciple, are ignorance, egoism, desire, aversion and a tenacious will to existence upon the earth.
- 2 There is no better way to cultivate humanity and justice in the heart than to diminish our desires.—
- 3 It is good to have what one desires, but it is better
- 4 to desire nothing more than what one has.—You tell me that good cheer, raiment, riches and luxury are happiness. I believe that the greatest felicity is to desire nothing, and in order to draw near to this supreme happiness, one must habituate oneself to have need of little.
- 5 O children of desire, cast off your garb of vanities.
- 6 —Renounce your desires and you shall taste of peace.
- 7 So long as man has not thrown from him the load of worldly desire which he carries about with him, he cannot be in tranquillity and at peace with him-

---

1) Patanjali.— 2) Meng-tse.— 3) Menedemus.— 4) Socrates.—  
5) Baha-ullah.— 6) Imitation of Christ.— 7) Ramakrishna.

8 self.—The man in whom all desires disappear like rivers into a motionless sea, attains to peace, not he whom they move to longing. That man whose walk is free from longing, for he has thrown all desires from him, who calls nothing his and has no sense of ego, is moving towards peace.

9 Ah ! let us live happy without desires among those who are given up to covetousness. In the midst of men full of desires, let us dwell empty of them.

\*  
\* \*

10 Let us impose upon our desires the yoke of submission to reason, let them be ever calm and never bring trouble into our souls ; thence result wisdom, constancy, moderation.

11 The man veritably free is he who, disburdened of fear and desire, is subjected only to his reason.—

12 Whoever prefers to all else his reason, does not enact tragedy, does not bewail himself, seeks neither solitude nor the crowd, but, greatest of all goods, he shall live without desire and without fear.

13 When his thought and feeling are perfectly under regulation and stand firm in his Self, then, unmoved to longing by any desire, he is said to be in union with the Self.

14 He has read everything, learned everything, practised everything, who has renounced his desires and lives without any straining of hope.

\*  
\* \*

15 The breath of desire and pleasure so ravages the world that it has extinguished the torch of knowledge and understanding.

---

8) Bhagavad Gita II. 70-71.— 9) Dhammapada.— 10) Cicero.—  
11) Fénelon.— 12) Marcus Aurelius.— 13) Bhagavad Gita VI. 18,  
— 14) Hitopadeya.— 15) Baha-ullah.



- 16 As the troubled surface of rolling waters cannot reflect aright the full moon, but gives only broken images of it, so the mentality troubled by the desires and passions of the world cannot reflect fully the light of the Eternal.—Then is the Eternal seen when the mind is at rest. When the sea of mind is tossed by the winds of desire, it cannot reflect the Eternal and all divine vision is impossible.
- 17
- 18 Man, wouldst thou be a sage, wouldst thou know thyself and know God? First thou shouldst extinguish in thyself the desire of the world.—Desire nothing. Rage not against the unalterable laws of Nature. Struggle only against the personal, the transient, the ephemeral, the perishable.—The light of thy spirit cannot destroy these shades of night so long as thou hast not driven out desire from thy soul.—
- 19
- 20
- 21 When thou art enfranchised from all hate and desire, then shalt thou win thy liberation.
- 22 Expel thy desires and fears and there shall be no longer any tyrant over thee.—If thou wouldst be free, accustom thyself to curb thy desires.
- 23
- 24 Slay thy desires, O disciple, make powerless thy vices, before thou takest the first step of that solemn journey.—Slay desire, but when thou hast slain it, take heed that it arise not again from the dead.
- 25
- 26 Surmount the desires of which gods and men are the subjects.
- 27 How canst thou desire anything farther when in thyself there are God and all things?

---

16) Ramakrishna. — 17) id. — 18) Angelus Silesius. — 19) Book of Golden Precepts. — 20) Hindu Wisdom. — 21) Dhammapadam. — 22) Marcus Aurelius. — 23) Tolstoi. — 24) Book of Golden Precepts. — 25) id. — 26) Uttara Sutta. — 27) Angelus Silesius.

---

# The Psychology of Social Development

---

## XVIII

In spirituality lies then the ultimate, the only hope for the perfection whether of the individual or of the communal man ; not the spirit which for its separate satisfaction turns away from the earth and her works, but that greater spirit which accepts and fulfils them. A spirituality taking up into itself man's rationalism, æstheticism, ethicism, vitalism, corporeality, his aim of knowledge, his aim of beauty, his aim of love and perfection, his aim of power and fullness of life and being, revealing to them their divine sense and the conditions of their godhead, reconciling them all to each other, illuminating to the vision of each the way which they now tread in half-lights and shadows, in blindness or with a deflected sight, is a goal which even man's too self-sufficient reason can accept ; for it reveals itself surely in the end as the logical, inevitable development and consummation of all for which he is individually and socially striving. The evolution of the inchoate spirituality in mankind is the possibility to which an age of subjectivism is the first glimmer of awakening or towards which it at least shows the first profound potentiality of return. A deeper, wider, greater, more spiritualised subjective understanding of the

individual and communal self and life and reliance on the spiritual light and the spiritual means for the solution of its problems are the only way to true social perfection. The free rule, that is to say, the predominant leading, influence, guidance of the developed spiritual man,—not the half-spiritualised or the raw religionist,—is our hope for the divine guidance of humanity. A spiritualised society is our hope for a communal happiness ; or in words which, though liable to abuse by the reason and the passions, are still the most expressive we can find, a new kind of theocracy, the kingdom of God upon earth, a theocracy which shall be the government of mankind by the Divine in the hearts and minds of men.

Certainly, this will not come about easily, or, as men have always vainly hoped from each great new turn and revolution of politics and society, by the sudden and at once entirely satisfying change of some magical transformation. The change, however it comes about, will certainly be of the nature of a miracle, as are all great changes and developments ; for they have the appearance of a kind of realised impossibility. But God works all his miracles by an evolution of secret possibilities which have been long prepared, at least in their elements, and in the end by a rapid bringing of all to a head, a throwing together of the elements so that in their fusion they produce a new form and name of things and reveal a new spirit. Often the change is preceded by an apparent emphasising and raising to their extreme of things which seem the very denial, the most uncompromising opposite of the new principle and the new creation. Such an evolution of the elements of a spiritualised society is that which a subjective age makes at least possible ; and that at the same time it raises to the last height of active power things which seem the very denial of such a potentiality, need be no index of its practical impossibility, but on the contrary may be the sign of its approach.

Certainly, the whole effort of a subjective age may go wrong ; but this happens oftenest when by the insufficiency of its materials, a great crudeness of its starting-point, a hasty shallowness or narrow intensity of its inlook into itself and things it is foredoomed to a fundamental error of self-knowledge. It becomes less likely when the spirit of the age is full of freedom, variety, a many-sided seeking, an effort after knowledge and perfection in all the domains of human activity, a straining after the infinite and the divine on many sides and in many aspects. In such circumstances, though a full advance may possibly not be made, a great advance may be safely predicted.

We have seen that there are necessarily three stages of the social evolution or, generally, of the human evolution in both individual and society. It starts with an infra-rational stage in which men have not yet learned to refer their life and action in its principles and its forms to the judgment of the clarified intelligence ; they act principally out of their instincts, impulses, spontaneous ideas and vital intuitions. It proceeds to a rational age in which the intelligent will of mankind more or less developed becomes the judge, arbiter and presiding motive of his thought, feeling and action, the moulder, destroyer and recreator of his leading ideas, aims and intuitions. It moves towards a suprarational or spiritual age in which he perceives a higher divine end, a divine sanction, a divine light of guidance for all he seeks to be, think, feel, do, and tries to obey it and live in it, not by any rule of infra-rational religious impulse and ecstasy, such as characterised or rather darkly illumined the obscure confusion and brute violence of the Middle Ages, but by a higher spiritual living for which the clarities of the reason are a necessary preparation and into which they too are taken up and transformed.

These stages or periods are much more inevitable

in the psychological evolution of mankind than the Stone and other Ages marked out by Science in his instrumental culture, for they depend not on outward means or accidents, but on the very nature of his being. But we must not suppose that they are naturally exclusive and absolute in their nature, or complete in their tendency or fulfilment when they come, or rigidly marked off from each other in their action or their time. They not only arise out of each other, but may be partially developed in each other; they may coexist in different parts of the earth at the same time. But, especially, since man is always a complex being, even man savage or degenerate, he cannot be any of these things exclusively or absolutely. Man not being an animal, even the infra-rational man cannot be utterly infra-rational, but must have or tend to have some kind of play more or less evolved or involved of the reason and a more or less crude supra-rational element, a more or less disguised working of the spirit. Not being a pure mental being, a pure intelligence, he cannot be wholly or merely rational. Not being a god, but at his highest a divinised human being, his very spirituality, however dominant, must have its rational and infra-rational tendencies and elements. And as with the psychological life of individuals, so must it be with the ages of his communal existence. They must be marked off from each other by the predominant play of one element, its force overpowering the others perhaps or taking them into itself; but an exclusive play is neither intended nor possible.

Thus an infra-rational period of human and social development need not be without its elements, its strong elements of reason and of spirituality. Even the savage, whether he be primitive or degenerate man, has some coherent idea of this world and the beyond, a theory of life and a religion. To us with our more advanced rationality his theory of life may seem incoherent, because

we have lost its point of view and its principle of mental associations. But it is still an act of reason, and within its limits he is capable of a sufficient play of thought both ideative and practical, as well as a clear ethical idea and motive, some æsthetic notions and an understood order of society poor and barbarous to our view, but well enough contrived and put together to serve the simplicity of its objects. Or again we may not realise the element of reason in a primitive theory of life or of spirituality in a barbaric religion, because it seems to us to be made up of symbols and forms to which a superstitious value seems to be attached by these undeveloped minds. But this is because the reason at this stage has an imperfect and limited action, the element of spirituality is crude or undeveloped and not yet self-conscious ; in order to hold firmly their working and make them real and concrete to himself, primitive man has to give them shape in symbols and forms to which he clings with a barbaric awe and reverence, because they alone can embody for him his method of self-guidance in life. For the dominant thing in him is his infrarational life of instinct, vital intuition and impulse, and it is that to which the rest of him has to give some kind of primary order and first glimmerings of light. The unrefined reason and unenlightened spirit in him cannot work for their own ends ; they are bond-slaves of his infra-rational being.

At a higher stage of development or of a return towards a fuller evolution,—for in all probability the actual savage in humanity is not the original primitive man, but a relapse and reversion towards primitiveness,—the infra-rational stage of society may arrive at a very high order of civilisation. It may have great intuitions of the meaning or general intention of its life, admirable ideas of the arrangement of life, a harmonious, well-adapted, durable and serviceable social system, an imposing religion which will not be without its profundities, but in which symbol

and ceremonial will form the largest portion and for the mass of men will be almost the whole of religion. In this stage pure reason and pure spirituality will not govern the society or move large bodies of men, but will be represented, if at all, by individuals at first few, but growing in number as these two powers increase in their purity and vigour and attract more and more votaries.

This may well lead to an age, if the development of reason is strongest, of great individual thinkers who seize on some idea of life and its origins and laws and erect that into a philosophy, of critical minds standing isolated above the mass who judge life, not yet with with a luminous largeness, a minute flexibility of understanding or a clear and comprehensive profundity, but still with power of intelligence, insight, acuteness, perhaps even a pre-eminent social thinker here and there who, taking advantage of some crisis or disturbance, is able to get the society to modify or reconstruct itself on the basis of some clearly rational and intelligent principle. Such an age seems to be represented by the traditions of the beginnings of Greek civilisation, or rather the beginnings of its mobile and progressive period. Or if spirituality predominates, there will be great mystics delving into the deeper psychological possibilities and truths of our being, divining and realising the truth of the self and spirit in man, and though they keep these things secret and imparted to a small number of initiates, yet deepening with them the crude forms of the popular life ; even such a development is obscurely indicated in the old traditions of the mysteries, and we see it taking in prehistoric India a quite peculiar turn which, as it developed, determined the whole future trend of the society and made Indian civilisation a thing apart and of its own kind in the history of the human race. But these things are only a first beginning of light in the midst of a humanity which is still infra-rational as well as infra-spiritual and, even when

it undergoes the influence of these precursors, does so obscurely, without any clearly intelligent or awakened spiritual reception of what they give or impose. It still turns everything into infra-rational form and disfiguring tradition and lives spiritually by ill-understood symbol and ceremonial. It feels obscurely these higher things, tries to live them in its own way, but it does not yet understand.

As reason and spirituality develop, they begin to become a larger and more diffused force, less intense perhaps, but wider and more effective on the mass. The mystics become the sowers of the seed of a great spiritual development in which whole classes of society and even men from all classes seek the light, as happened in India in the age of the Upanishads. The solitary individual thinkers are replaced by a great number of writers, poets, thinkers, rhetoricians, sophists, scientific inquirers, who pour out a great flood of acute speculation and inquiry, as happened in Greece in the age of the sophists. The spiritual development, arising uncurbed by reason in an infra-rational society, has often a tendency to outrun at first the rational and intellectual. For the greatest illuminating force of the infra-rational man, as he develops, is an inferior intuition, an instinctively intuitional sight arising out of the force of life in him, and the transition from this to an intensity of inner life and the growth of a deeper spiritual intuition which outleaps the intellect and seems to dispense with it, is an easy passage in the individual man. But for humanity at large this movement cannot last; the mind and intellect must develop to their fullness so that the spirituality of the race may rise upon a broad basis of the developed lower nature in man the intelligent, mental being. Therefore we see the intelligence in its growth either doing away with the distinct spiritual tendency for a time, as in Greece, or spinning itself out around its first data and activities, so that, as in India, the mystic



seer is replaced by the philosopher-mystic, the religious thinker and the philosopher pure and simple.

For a time the new growth and impulse may seem to be taking possession of a whole community as in Athens or in old Aryan India. But these early dawns cannot endure in their purity, so long as the race is not ready. There is a crystallisation, a lessening of the first impetus, a new growth of infrarational forms in which the thought or the spirituality is overgrown by or imbedded in the form and may even die in it, while the tradition of the living knowledge, the higher life and activity remains the property of the higher classes or a highest class. The multitude remains infrarational in its habit of mind, though perhaps still keeping in capacity an enlivened intelligence or a greater spiritual receptiveness as its gain from the past. So long as the hour of the rational age has not arrived, the irrational period of society cannot be overpassed ; and that can only be when not a class or a few, but the multitude has learned to think, to exercise its intelligence actively,—it matters not at first however imperfectly,—upon their life, their needs, their rights, their duties, their aspirations as human beings. Until then we have as the highest development a mixed society, infrarational in the mass, with a higher class whose business it is to seek after the reason and the spirit, to keep the gains of mankind in these fields, to add to them, to enlighten and raise with them as much as possible the life of the society.

At this point we see Nature in her human society moving forward slowly on the various lines of activity towards a greater application of reason and spirituality which shall at last bring near the possibility of a rational age of mankind. Her difficulties proceed from two sides. First, as she originally developed thought and reason by exceptional individuals, so she develops them in the mass by exceptional communities, classes and nations. But the exceptional nation touched by a developed reason or spi-

rituality or both, as Greece and later Rome in ancient Europe, India, China and Persia in ancient Asia, is surrounded or neighboured by great masses of the old infra-rational humanity and endangered by them ; for until a developed science comes in to redress the balance, the barbarian has always a greater physical force and unexhausted native power of aggression than the cultured community. At this stage civilisation always collapses in the end before the attack. Then Nature has to train more or less slowly, with great difficulty and much loss and delay, the conquerors to develop among themselves what they have temporarily destroyed or impaired. In the end humanity gains by the process ; for a greater mass of the nations is brought in, a larger and more living force of progress applied, a starting-point arrived at for richer and more varied gains. But a certain loss is always the price of this advance.

Within the communities themselves reason and spirituality are at this stage always hampered and endangered by existing in a milieu and atmosphere not their own. The classes which are in charge of them, are obliged to throw them into forms which the great mass of human ignorance they lead and rule will accept, and both reason and spirituality tend to be stifled by these forms, to get stereotyped, fossilised, void of life, bound up from their natural play. Secondly, being part of the mass, these classes are themselves much under the influences of their infra-rational parts and do not, except in individuals, arrive at the entirely free play of pure reason or the free light of the spirit. Thirdly, there is always the danger of these classes gravitating downward to the ignorance below them or even collapsing into it. She guards herself by various devices for maintaining the tradition of intellectual and spiritual activity in the favoured classes, making it a point of honour for them to preserve and promote the national culture, establishing a preservative system of education and

discipline. And in order that all these things may not degenerate into mere traditionalism, she brings in a series of intellectual and spiritual movements which by their shock revivify the failing life and help to bring about a broadening and enlarging and to drive reason and spirituality deeper down into the infrarational mass. Each movement indeed tends to petrify after a shorter or longer activity, but a fresh shock and wave arrive in time to save and regenerate. Finally, she reaches the point when, having overcome all immediate danger of relapse, she can proceed to her next great advance in the cycle of social evolution. This must take the form of a universalising of the habit of reason and the application of the intelligence and intelligent will to life, thus instituting a rational age of human society.

---

# The Ideal of Human Unity

---

## XXIX

The only means readily suggesting itself by which the necessary group-freedom can be preserved and yet the unification of the human race achieved, is to strive not towards a closely organised world-State, but towards a free, elastic and progressive world-union. If this is to be done, we shall have to discourage that almost inevitable tendency which must lead any unification by political, economical and administrative means, in a word, by the force of machinery, to follow the analogy of the evolution of the nation-State; we shall have to encourage and revive that force of idealistic nationalism which before the present War seemed on the point of being crushed on the one side under the weight of the increasing world-empires of England, Russia, France and latterly Germany, on the other by the progress of the opposite ideal of internationalism with its large and devastating contempt for the narrow ideas of country and nation and its denunciation of the evils of nationalistic patriotism. And in addition we shall have to find a cure for the as yet incurable separative sentiments natural to the very idea to which we shall have to give a renewed strength. How is all this to be done?

On our side in the attempt we have the natural principle of compensating reactions. Whatever may be the

validity of the law of action and reaction in physical Science, in human action, which must always depend largely on psychological forces, it is a constant truth. That to every action there is a tendency of reaction which may not operate immediately, but must operate eventually, which may not act with an equal and entirely compensating force, but must act with some force of compensation, may be taken as well established ; it is both a philosophical necessity and a constant fact of experience. For we see that Nature works in this fashion ; having for some time insisted on the dominant force of one tendency, she seeks to correct its exaggerations by reviving or newly awakening or bringing into the field in a new and modified form the opposite tendency. After a long insistence on centralisation she tries to modify it by at least a subordinated decentralisation ; having long insisted on more uniformity she calls again into play the spirit of variation. The result need not be an equipollence of the two tendencies, it may be any kind of compromise ; or instead of a compromise it may be in act a fusion and in result a new creation which shall be a compound of both principles. We may expect her to apply the same method to the tendencies of unification and group variation in dealing with the great mass unit of humanity. At present the nation is the fulcrum which the latter tendency has been using for its workings as against the imperialistic tendency of unifying assimilation. The course of Nature's working in humanity may either destroy the nation unit, as she destroyed the tribe and clan, and develop a quite new principle of grouping or else may preserve it and give it sufficient power of vitality and duration to balance usefully the trend towards too heavy a force of unification. It is this latter contingency that we have to consider.

The two forces in action before the war were Imperialism—of various colours, as the more rigid imperialism of Germany, the more liberal imperialism of

England,—and nationalism. They were the two sides of one phenomenon, the aggressive or expansive and the defensive aspects of national egoism. But in the trend of imperialism this egoism had some eventual chance of dissolving itself by excessive self-enlargement, as the aggressive tribe disappeared, for example, the Persian tribe first into the empire and then into the nationality of the Persian people, or as the city-state also disappeared, first into the Roman empire and then both tribe and city-state without hope of revival into the nations which arose by fusion out of the irruption of the German tribes into the declining Latin unity. So aggressive national Imperialism by overspreading the world might end in destroying altogether the nation unit in precisely the same way as the city-state and tribe were destroyed by the aggressive expansion of a few city-states and tribes. Defensive nationalism has been a force reacting against this tendency and restricting it to the best of its ability. But before the War, the separative force of nationalism seemed doomed to impotence and final suppression before the tremendous power with which science, organisation and efficiency had armed the governing States of the large imperial aggre-

All the facts were pointing in one direction. Corea had disappeared into the nascent Japanese empire on the mainland of Asia. Persian nationalism had succumbed and lay suppressed under a system of spheres of influence which were really a veiled protectorate, and all experience shows that the beginning of a protectorate is also the beginning of the end of the protected nation ; it is an euphemistic name for the first process of chewing previous to deglutition. Tibet and Siam were so weak and visibly declining that their continued immunity could not be hoped for. China itself had only escaped by the jealousies of the world-Powers and by its size which made it an awkward morsel to swallow, let alone to digest. The par-

tition of all Asia between four or five or at the most six great empires seemed a foregone conclusion which nothing but an unexampled international convulsion could prevent. The European conquest of Northern Africa had practically been completed by the disappearance of Morocco, the confirmed English protectorate over Egypt and the Italian hold on Tripoli. Somaliland was in a preliminary process of slow deglutition; Abyssinia, saved once by Menelik but now torn by internal discord, was the object of a revived dream of Italian colonial empire. The Boer republics had gone under before the advancing tide of imperialistic aggression. All the rest of Africa practically was the private property of three great Powers and two small ones. In Europe no doubt there were still a few small independent nations, Balkan and Teutonic, and also two quite unimportant neutralised countries. But the Balkans were a constant theatre of uncertainty and disturbance and the rival national egoisms could only have ended, in case of the ejection of Turkey from Europe, either by the formation of a young, hungry and ambitious Slav empire under the dominance of Servia or Bulgaria or by their disappearance into the shadow of Austria and Russia. The Teutonic states were coveted by expanding Germany and, had that Power been guided by the prudently daring diplomacy of a new Bismarck,—a not unlikely contingency, could William II have gone to the grave before letting loose the hounds of war,—their absorption might well have been compassed. There remained America where imperialism had not yet arisen, but it was already emerging in the form of Rooseveltian Republicanism, and the interference in Mexico, hesitating as it was, yet pointed to the inevitability of a protectorate and a final absorption of the disorderly Central American republics; the union of South America would then have become a defensive necessity. It was only the stupendous cataclysm of the world-war which interfered with the pro-

gressive march towards the division of the world into less than a dozen great empires.

The War has revived with a startling force the idea of free nationality, throwing it up in three forms, each with a stamp of its own. First, in opposition to the imperialistic ambitions of Germany in Europe the allied nations, although themselves empires, have been obliged to appeal to and champion a qualified ideal of free nationality. Secondly, America, more politically idealistic than Europe, has entered the war with a cry for a league of free nations. Finally, the pure idealism of the Russian revolution has cast into this new creative chaos an entirely new element by the distinct, positive, uncompromising recognition, free from all reserves of diplomacy and self-interest, of the right of every aggregate of men naturally marked off from other aggregates to decide its own political status and destiny. These three positions are in fact distinct from each other, but each has in effect some relation to the actually possible future of humanity. The first bases itself upon the present conditions and aims at a certain practical rearrangement; the second tries to hasten into immediate practicability a not entirely remote possibility of the future; the third aims at bringing into precipitation by the alchemy of revolution,—for what we inappropriately call revolution, is only a rapidly concentrated movement of evolution,—a yet remote end which in the ordinary course of events could only be realised, if at all, in the far distant future. All of them have to be considered; for a prospect which only takes into view existing realised forces or apparently realisable possibilities is foredoomed to error. Moreover, the Russian idea by its attempt at self-effectuation, however immediately ineffective, has rendered itself an actual force which must be reckoned with. A great idea already striving to enforce itself in the field of practice is a force which cannot be left out of count, nor valued only according to its apparent chances of immedi-



ate effectuation.

The position take by England, France and Italy, the European section of the Allies, contemplates a political rearrangement of the world, but not any radical change of its existing order. It is true that it enounces the principle of free nationalities ; but in international politics which is still a play of natural forces and interests and in which ideals are only a comparatively recent development of the human mind, principles can only prevail where and so far as they are consonant with interests, or where and so far as, being hostile to interests, they are yet assisted by natural forces strong enough to overbear the interests which oppose them. The pure application of ideals to politics is as yet a revolutionary method of action which can only be hoped for in exceptional crises ; the day when it becomes a rule of life, human nature and life itself will have become a new phenomenon, something almost superterrestrial and divine. That day is not yet. The allied Powers in Europe are themselves nations with an imperial past and an imperial future ; they cannot, even if they wished, get away by the force of a mere word, a mere idea from that past and that future. Their first interest and therefore the first duty of their statesmen must be to preserve the empire, and even, where it can in their view be legitimately done, to increase it ; the principle of free nationality can only be applied by them in its purity where their own imperial interests are not affected, as against Turkey and the Central Powers, because there the principle is consonant with their own interests and can be supported as against German, Austrian or Turkish interests by the natural force of a successful war justified morally in its result because it was invited by the Powers which will have to suffer. It cannot be applied in its purity where their own imperial interests are affected, because there it is opposed to existing interests and there is no sufficient countervailing force by

which that opposition can be counteracted. Here therefore it must be acted upon in a qualified sense, as a force moderating that of pure imperialism. So applied it will amount in fact to the concession of internal self-government or Home Rule in such proportion, at such a time or by such stages as may be possible, practicable and expedient for the interests of the Empire and of the subject nation so far as they can be accommodated with one another. It must be understood, in other words, as the common sense of the ordinary man would understand it ; it cannot be and has nowhere been understood in the sense which would be attached to it by the pure idealist of the Russian type who is careless of all but the naked purity of his principle.

What then would be the practical consequences of this qualified principle of free nationality as it would be possible to apply it in the result of a complete victory of the Allied Powers, its representatives ? In America it would have no field of immediate application. In Africa there are not only no free nations, but with the exception of Egypt and Abyssinia no nations, properly speaking ; for Africa is the one part of the world where the old tribal conditions have still survived and only tribal peoples exist, not nations in the political sense of the word. Here then a complete victory of the Allies would mean the partition of the continent between three colonial Empires, Italy, France and England, with the continuance of the Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese enclaves and the precarious continuance for a time of the Abyssinian kingdom. In Asia it would mean the appearance of three or four new nationalities out of the ruins of the Turkish empire ; but these by their immaturity would all be foredoomed to remain, for a time at least, under the influence or the protection of one or other of the great Powers. In Europe it would imply the diminution of Germany by the loss of Alsace and Poland, the disintegration of

the Austrian empire,\* the reversion of the Adriatic coast to Servia and Italy, the liberation of the Czech and Polish nations, some rearrangement in the Balkan Peninsula and the adjacent countries, and perhaps, sooner or later, the conversion of Hungary into a Slavic state with a large Magyar minority. All this, it is clear, would mean a great change in the map of the world, but no radical transformation. The existing tendency of nationalism would gain some extension by the creation of some new independent nations; the existing tendency of imperial aggregation would gain a great extension by the expansion of the actual territory, of the world-wide influence and of the international responsibilities of the successful empires.

Still certain very important results will have been gained which must make in the end for a free world-union. The most important of these, the result of the Russian Revolution born out of the war and its battle-cry of free nationality, but still contingent on the success of the revolutionary principle, will be the disappearance of Russia as an aggressive empire and its transformation from an imperialistic aggregate into a congeries or a federation of independent republics. The second will be the destruction of the German type of imperialism and the salvation of a number of independent nationalities which lay under its menace. The third will be the multiplication of distinct nationalities with a claim to the recognition of their separate existence and legitimate voice in the affairs of the world, which will make for the strengthening of the idea of a free world-union as the ultimate solution of international problems. The fourth is the definite recognition by the British nation of the qualified principle of free nationality in the inevitable reorganisation of the empire.

\* This possibility has been modified by a recent pronouncement. But the modification is inconsistent with the free choice of their future by the Slav peoples.

This development has taken two forms, the definite recognition of the principle of Home Rule in Ireland and India and the recognition of the claim of each constituent nation to a voice, which in the event of Home Rule must mean a free and equal voice, in the councils of the Empire. Taken together these two things mean the ultimate conversion from an empire constituted on the old principle of nationalistic imperialism which was represented by the supreme government of one predominant nation, England, into a free and equal commonwealth of nations managing their common affairs through a supple coordination by mutual good will and agreement. In other words, it will mean in the end the application within certain limits of precisely that principle which would underlie the constitution on the larger scale of a free world-union. Much work will have to be done, several extensions made, many counterforces overcome before this commonwealth can become a realised fact, but that it should have taken shape in the principle and the germ, is a notable event in world-history. Two questions remain. What will be the effect of this experiment on the other empires which adhere to the old principle of a dominant centralisation? Probably it will have this effect, if it succeeds, that as they are faced by the growth of strong nationalistic movements, they will be led to adopt the same or a similar solution, just as they adopted from England with modifications her successful system of Parliamentary government in the affairs of the nation. Secondly, what of the relations between these empires and the many independent non-imperial nations or republics which will exist under the new arrangement of the world? How are they to be preserved from fresh attempts to extend the imperial idea, or how is their existence to be correlated in the international comity with the huge and overshadowing power of the great empires? It is here that the American idea of the League

of free nations intervenes and finds its justification.

Unfortunately, it is still difficult to know what exactly this idea will mean in practice. The utterances of its spokesman, President Wilson, have been marked hitherto by a magnificent nebulous idealism full of inspiring ideas and phrases, but empty of any clear and specific application. We must look for light to the past history and the traditional temperament of the American people. The United States have always been pacific and non-imperialistic, yet with an undertone of nationalistic susceptibility which threatened recently to take an imperialistic turn and has led the nation to make two or three wars ending in conquests whose results it had then to reconcile with its non-imperialistic pacifism. It annexed Mexican Texas by war and then turned it into a constituent State of the union, swamping it at the same time with American colonists. It conquered Cuba from Spain and the Philippines first from Spain and then from the insurgent Filipinos and, not being able to swamp them with colonists, gave Cuba independence under the American influence and has promised the Filipinos a complete independence which it will no doubt protect against any other foreign aggression. American idealism is governed by a shrewd sense of American interests, and highest among these interests is reckoned the preservation of the American political idea and its constitution, to which all imperialism foreign or American is regarded as a moral peril.

We may take it then that the League of nations as announced will have both an opportunist and an idealistic element. The opportunist element will make it fake in its first form the legalisation of the map and political formation of the world as it will emerge from the convulsion of the war. Its idealistic side will be the use of the influence of America in the league to favour the increasing application of the democratic principle

everywhere and the final emergence of a United States of the world with a democratic Congress of the nations as its governing agency. The legalisation will have the good effect of minimising the chances of war,—provided always the league proves practicable and succeeds, which is by no means a foregone conclusion. But it will have the bad effect of tending to stereotype a state of things which must be in part artificial, irregular, anomalous and only temporarily useful. Law is necessary for order and stability, but it becomes a conservative and hampering force unless it provides itself with an effective machinery for changing the laws as soon as circumstances and new needs make that desirable. This can only happen when the Parliament, Congress or free Council of the nations becomes an accomplished thing. Meanwhile how is the added force for the conservation of old principles to be counteracted and an evolution assured which will lead to the consummation desired by the democratic American ideal? America's influence in the League will not be sufficient for that purpose; for it will have at its side other influences interested in preserving the status quo and some interested in developing the imperialist solution. Another force, another influence is needed. Here the Russian ideal with the great though as yet quite chaotic attempt to apply it intervenes and finds its justification. For our present purpose it is the most interesting and important of the three anti-imperialistic influences which Nature has thrown into her great crucible of war and revolution.

---

# The Future Poetry

## THE ESSENCE OF POETRY

In order to get a firm clue which we can follow fruitfully in the retrospect and prospect we have proposed to ourselves, it will not be amiss to enquire what is the highest power we demand from poetry ; or,—let us put it more largely and get nearer the root of the matter,—what may be the nature of poetry, its essential law, and how out of that arises the possibility of its use as the *mantra* of the Real. Not that we need spend a vain effort in labouring to define anything so profound, elusive and indefinable as the breath of poetic creation ; to take the myriad-stringed harp of Saraswati to pieces for the purpose of scientific analysis must always be a narrow and rather barren amusement. But we do stand in need of some guiding intuitions, some helpful descriptions which will serve to enlighten our search ; and to fix in that way, not by definition, but by description, the essential things in poetry is neither an impossible, nor an unprofitable endeavour.

We meet here two common enough errors, to one of which the ordinary uninstructed mind is most liable, to the other the too instructed critic or the too intellectually conscientious artist or craftsman. To the ordinary mind, judging poetry without really entering into it, it looks as if it were nothing more than an aesthetic pleasure of the imagination, the intellect and the ear, a sort of elevated pastime. If that were all, we need not have wasted time in seeking for its spirit, its inner aim, its deeper law. Anything pretty, pleasant and melodious with a beautiful idea in it would serve our turn ; a song of Anacreon or a plaint of Minnermis would be as good as the Oedipus, Agamemnon or Odyssey, for from this point of view they might well strike us as equally and even, one might contend, more perfect in their light, but exquisite unity and brevity. Pleasure, certainly, we expect from poetry as from all art ; but the external sensible and even the inner imaginative pleasure are only first elements ; refined in order to meet the highest requirements of the intelligence, the imagination and the ear, they have to be still farther heightened and in their nature raised beyond even their own noblest levels.

For neither the intelligence, the imagination nor the ear are the true recipients of the poetic delight, even

as they are not its true creators ; they are only its channels and instruments : the true creator, the true hearer is the soul. The more rapidly and transparently the rest do their work of transmission, the less they make of their separate claim to satisfaction, the more directly the word reaches and sinks deep into the soul, the greater the poetry. Therefore poetry has not really done its work, at least its highest work, until it has raised the pleasure of the instrument and transmuted it into the deeper delight of the soul. A divine Ananda, a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative,—one might almost say, an inverse reflection of the joy which the universal Soul has felt in its great release of energy when it rang out into the rhythmic forms of the universe the spiritual truth, the large interpretative idea, the life, the power, the emotion of things packed into its original creative vision,—such spiritual joy is that which the soul of the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it. And this delight is not merely a godlike pastime ; it is a great formative and illuminative power.

The critic—of a certain type—or the intellectually conscientious artist will, on the other hand, often talk as if poetry were mainly a matter of a faultlessly correct or at most an exquisite technique. Certainly, in all art good technique is the first step towards perfection ; but there are so many other steps, there is a whole world beyond before you can get near to what you seek ; so much so that even a deficient correctness of execution will not prevent an intense and gifted soul from creating great poetry which keeps its hold on the centuries. Moreover, technique, however indispensable, occupies a smaller field perhaps in poetry than in any other art,—first, because its instrument, the rhythmic word, is fuller of subtle and immaterial elements ; then because, the most complex, flexible, variously suggestive of all the instruments of the artistic creator, it has more infinite possibilities in many directions than any other. The rhythmic word has a subtly sensible element, its sound value, a quite immaterial element, its significance or thought-value, and both of these again, its sound and its sense, have separately and together a soul value, a direct spiritual power, which is infinitely the most important thing about



them. And though this comes to birth with a small element subject to the laws of technique, yet almost immediately, almost at the beginning of its flight, its power soars up beyond the province of any laws of mechanical construction.

Rather it determines itself its own form. The poet least of all artists needs to create with his eye fixed anxiously on the technique of his art. He has to possess it, no doubt ; but in the heat of creation the intellectual sense of it becomes a subordinate action or even a mere undertone in his mind, and in his best moments he is permitted, in a way, to forget it altogether. For then the perfection of his sound-movement and style come entirely as the spontaneous form of his soul : that utters itself in an inspired rhythm and an innate, a revealed word, even as the universal Soul created the harmonies of the universe out of the power of the word secret and eternal within him, leaving the mechanical work to be done in a surge of hidden spiritual excitement by the subconscious part of his Nature. It is this highest speech which is the supreme poetic utterance, the immortal element in his poetry, and a little of it is enough to save the rest of his work from oblivion. *Swadham apyasya dharmasya !*

This power makes the rhythmic word of the poet the highest form of speech available to man for the expression whether of his self-vision or of his world-vision. It is noticeable that even the highest experience, the pure spiritual which enters into things that can never be wholly expressed, still, when it does try to express them and not merely to explain them intellectually, tends instinctively to use, often the rhythmic forms, almost always the manner of speech characteristic of poetry. But poetry attempts to extend this manner of vision and utterance to all experience, even the most objective, and therefore it has a natural urge towards the expression of something in the object beyond its mere appearances, even when those seem outwardly to be all that it is enjoying.

We may usefully cast a glance, not at the last inexpressible secret, but at the first elements of this heightening and intensity peculiar to poetic utterance. Ordinary speech uses language mostly for a limited practical utility of communication ; it uses it for life and for the expression of ideas and feelings necessary or useful to life. In doing so, we treat words as conventional signs for ideas

with nothing but a perfunctory attention to their natural force, much as we use any kind of common machine or simple implement, ; we treat them as if, though useful for life, they were themselves without life. When we wish to put a more vital power into them, we have to lend it to them out of ourselves, by marked intonations of the voice, by the emotional force or vital energy we throw into the sound so as to infuse into the conventional word-sign something which is not inherent in itself. But if we go back earlier in the history of language and still more if we look into its origins, we shall, I think, find that it was not always so with human speech. Words had not only a real and vivid life of their own, but the speaker was more conscious of it than we can possibly be with our mechanised and sophisticated intellects. This arose from the primitive nature of language which, probably, in its first movement was not intended,—or shall we say, did not intend,—so much to stand for distinct ideas of the intelligence as for feelings, sensations, broad indefinite mental impressions with minute shades of quality in them which we do not now care to pursue. The intellectual sense in its precision must have been a secondary element which grew more dominant as language evolved.

For the reason why sound came to express fixed ideas, lies not in any natural and inherent equivalence between the sound and its intellectual sense, for there is none,—intellectually any sound might express any sense, if men were agreed on a conventional equivalence between them ; it started from an indefinable quality or property in the sound to raise certain vibrations in the life-soul of the human creature, in his sensational, his emotional, his crude mental being. An example may indicate more clearly what I mean. The word *wolf*, the origin of which is no longer present to our minds, denotes to our intelligence a certain living object and that is all, the rest we have to do for ourselves : the Sanskrit word *wika*, “tearer”, came in the end to do the same thing, but originally it expressed the sensational relation between the wolf and man which most affected the man’s life, and it did so by a certain quality in the sound which readily associated it with the sensation of tearing. This must have given early language a powerful life, a concrete vigour, in one direction a natural poetic force which it has lost, however greatly it has gained in precision, clarity, utility.

Now, poetry goes back in a way and recovers, though in another fashion, as much as it can of this original element. It does this partly by a stress on the image replacing the old sensational concreteness, partly by a greater attention to the suggestive force of the sound, its life, its power, the mental impression it carries. It associates this with the definitive thought value contributed by the intelligence and increases both by each other. In that way it succeeds at the same time in carrying up the power of speech to the direct expression of a higher reach of experience than the intellectual or vital. For it brings out not only the definitive intellectual value of the word, not only its power of emotion and sensation, its vital suggestion, but through and beyond these its soul-suggestion, its spirit. So poetry arrives at the indication of infinite meanings beyond the finite intellectual meaning the word carries. It expresses not only the life-soul of man as did the primitive word, not only the ideas of his intelligence for which speech now usually serves, but the experience, the vision, the ideas, as we may say, of the higher and wider soul in him. Making, them real to our-life soul as well as present to our intellect, it opens to us by the word the doors of the Spirit.

Prose style carries speech to a much higher power than its ordinary use, but it differs from poetry in not making this yet greater attempt. For it takes its stand firmly on the intellectual value of the word. It uses rhythms which ordinary speech neglects, and aims at a general fluid harmony of movement. It seeks to associate words agreeably and luminously so as at once to please and to clarify the intelligence. It strives after a more accurate, subtle, flexible and satisfying expression than the rough methods of ordinary speech care to compass. A higher adequacy of speech is its first object. Beyond this adequacy it may aim at a greater forcefulness and effectiveness by various devices of speech which are so many rhetorical means for heightening its force of intellectual appeal. Passing beyond this first limit, this just or strong, but always restraining measure, it may admit a more emphatic rhythm, more directly and powerfully stimulate the emotion, appeal to a more vivid aesthetic sense. It may even make such a free or rich use of images as to suggest an outward approximation to the manner of poetry; but it employs them decoratively, as ornaments,

*alankara*, or for their effective value in giving a stronger intellectual vision of the thing or the thought it describes or defines ; it does not use the image for that profounder and more living vision for which the poet is always seeking. And always it has its eye on its chief hearer and judge, the intelligence, and calls in other powers only as important aids to capture his suffrage. Reason and taste, two powers of the intelligence, are rightly the supreme gods of the prose stylist, while to the poet they are only minor deities.

If it goes beyond these limits, approaches in its measures a more striking rhythmic balance, uses images for sheer vision, opens itself to a mightier breath of speech, prose style passes beyond its province and approaches or even enters the confines of poetry. It becomes poetical prose or even poetry itself using the apparent forms of prose as a disguise or a loose apparel. A high or a fine adequacy, effectivity, intellectual illuminativeness and a carefully tempered aesthetic satisfaction are the natural and normal powers of its speech. But the privilege of the poet is to go beyond and discover that more intense illumination of speech, that inspired word and supreme inevitable utterance, in which there meets the unity of a divine rhythmic movement with a depth of sense and a power of infinite suggestion welling up directly from the fountain-heads of the spirit within us. He may not always or often find it, but to seek for it is the law of his utterance, and when he can not only find it, but cast into it some deeply revealed truth of the spirit itself, he utters the *mantra*.

But always, whether in the search or the finding, the whole style and rhythm of poetry are the expression and movement which come from us out of a certain spiritual excitement caused by a vision in the soul of which it is eager to deliver itself. The vision may be of any thing in Nature or God or man or the life of creatures or the life of things ; it may be a vision of force and action, or of sensible beauty, or of truth of thought, or of emotion and pleasure and pain, of this life or the life beyond. It is sufficient that it is the soul which sees and the eye, sense, heart and thought-mind become the passive instruments of the soul. Then we get the real, the high poetry. But if it is too much an excitement of the intellect, the imagination, the emotions, the vital activities

seeking rhythmical and forceful expression which acts, without enough of the greater spiritual excitement embracing them, if all these are not sufficiently sunk into the soul, steeped in it, fused in it and the expression does not come out purified and uplifted by a sort of spiritual transmutation, then we fall to lower levels of poetry, and get work of a much more doubtful immortality. And when the appeal is altogether to the lower things in us, to the mere mind, we arrive outside the true domain of poetry; we approach the confines of prose or get prose itself masking in the apparent forms of poetry, and the work is distinguished from prose style only or mainly by its mechanical elements, a good verse form and perhaps a more compact, catching or energetic expression than the prose writer will ordinarily permit to the easier and looser balance of his speech. That is to say, it will not have at all or not sufficiently the true essence of poetry.

For in all things that speech can express there are two elements, the outward or instrumental and the real or spiritual. In thought, for instance, there is the intellectual idea, that which the intelligence makes precise and definite to us, and the soul-idea, that which exceeds the intellectual and brings us into nearness or identity with the whole reality of the thing expressed. Equally in emotion, it is not the mere emotion itself the poet seeks, but the soul of the emotion, that in it for the delight of which the soul in us and the world desires or accepts emotional experience. So too with the poetical sense of objects, the poet's attempt to embody in his speech truth of life or truth of Nature. It is this greater truth and its delight and beauty for which he is seeking, beauty which is truth and truth beauty and therefore a joy for ever, because it brings us the delight of the soul in the discovery of its own deeper realities. This greater element the more timid and temperate speech of prose can sometimes shadow out to us, but the heightened and fearless style of poetry makes it close and living and the higher cadences of poetry carry in on their wings what the style by itself could not bring. This is the source of that intensity which is the stamp of poetical speech and of the poetical movement. It comes from the stress of the soul-vision behind the word; it is the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage of self-discovery among the magic islands of form and name in these inner and outer worlds.



105/ARY



2648







